

Egyptians opposed to war arrested

CAIRO (R) — An Egyptian human rights group accused the government Saturday of clamping down illegally on opponents to the Gulf war. "Selective measures, such as military tribunals and imprisonment, have been directed against those opposed to the (Gulf) war wishing to express their opinion," said a statement by the Egyptian Organisation for Human Rights (EOHR). Egypt, a key Arab member of the anti-Iraqi alliance, has sent about 35,000 troops to the multinational force in the Gulf. Most Egyptians have backed President Hosni Mubarak's firm anti-Iraqi stand but opposition leaders predict more people will turn against the war as fighting increases. "We note growing violation of human rights in Egypt since the Gulf crisis erupted... and fear an increase in such abuses as the circle of opponents to the war and Egypt's military participation widens," the EOHR statement added. It said several opposition leaders were illegally forced from leaving the country last year while two editors of opposition newspapers were being tried by military courts. About 500 people attended an anti-war meeting that day at the headquarters of the leftist Unionist Progressive Party.

Jordan Times

An independent Arab political daily published by the Jordan Press Foundation
جوردان تايمز يومية سياسية تصدر بالانجليزية عن المؤسسة الصحفية الأردنية «الراي»

U.S. serviceman killed by 'friendly fire'

RIYADH (Agencies) — AN American serviceman was killed perhaps by "friendly fire," the U.S. military command said Saturday. Maj. Gen. Robert Johnston of the U.S. central command also said Iraq had made some other border crossing, but they were insignificant. U.S. troops exchanged anti-tank, grenade and machinegun fire with an Iraqi patrol that had slipped into Saudi Arabia and tried to ambush them, officers said. The intense 15-minute firefight Friday night was not believed to have caused casualties on either side but troops in the 82nd Airborne Division went on full combat alert to prepare for a possible Iraqi ground assault. About 25 Iraqis aboard two light vehicles armed with rocket-propelled grenades and machineguns slipped several kilometres inside Saudi Arabia after dark.

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Iraqis down 2 U.S. planes; fire missile at Israel

Israelis withhold site of attack

Combined agency dispatches

ONE MISSILE WAS fired Saturday from western Iraq at Israel and struck, but the army withheld the exact location. "There has been one missile fired and one hit reported," army spokesman Nachman Shai told Israel Radio. "At this moment we are searching for the site of impact," he said. "As far as we know there have been no injuries or damage."

Brigadier-General Shai did not say in which area the missile landed nor whether the U.S.-supplied Patriot missile defence system was fired. Reporters in Tel Aviv, who have heard sound of the Patriots being fired in the past, said they heard no such noise Sunday.

Air raid sirens sounded throughout Israel at 8:30 p.m. (1830 GMT) indicating a possible attack. The alert was announced on the radio at 9:07 p.m. (1907 GMT).

When the sirens sound, Israelis are ordered to don gas masks and enter sealed rooms to protect them from chemical attacks.

Some Israelis apparently have begun to get lax about taking cover, and Gen. Shai appealed on the radio for them not to go outside to try to see what was happening.

"Everyone who is standing on the roofs is endangering their lives," he said. Iraq has repeatedly threatened to hit the Jewish state with chemicals. Previous attacks all have involved conventional warheads.

There have been eight previous missile attacks aimed at the Jewish state since the start of the Gulf war Jan. 17. Two people were killed and two died of heart attacks in earlier barrages on the Tel Aviv area. At least 270 were wounded, and more than 1,300 apartments were damaged.

U.S.-supplied Patriot missiles have intercepted incoming Iraqi missiles on at least three occasions. The last two missiles landed in the Israeli-occupied West Bank, but caused no casualties and no serious damage.

The Patriots were not fired to defend against these attacks Jan. 28 and Jan. 31, and army officials blamed the missiles outside the Patriots' area of coverage.

The strikes in the West Bank have raised criticism because the army has been slow to distribute gas masks to Palestinians.

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A residential area hit in the allied bombardment at the southern Iraqi city of Basra (Photo by R. Hassan — Al Qadisiya)

Iraq vows to fight with everything it has

Combined agency dispatches

IRAQ, SIX MONTHS to the day since its takeover of Kuwait, said Saturday it would fight with everything it has to win.

"With its troops continuously pointed by a U.S.-led aerial bombardment, Iraq said that five tank thrusts into Saudi Arabia this week showed that it still held the initiative in the Gulf war."

"... We would like to reiterate an established eternal fact: Iraq's leadership, army, and people will not relinquish their country from Zakhu to Kuwait," Iraq's Defence Ministry's Al Qadisiyah newspaper said.

"For the sake of this noble legitimate objective... we will use all force and arms in our possession, beginning with the knife and bullets, arms of annihilation, and ending with the weapons of mass destruction, because nothing deserves to live after Iraq," the paper added.

Iraq has not yet carried out its threats to use chemical weapons in the Gulf war.

Al Qadisiyah said Iraq's thrusts into Saudi Arabia showed it still

held the initiative in the Gulf war and that the U.S.-led allied forces had no choice but to go into a ground battle.

"Despite imperialist, barbaric attack Iraq still holds the reins of power on the battlefield."

"The allied invasion forces are left with no choice but to fight the ground war and come face to face with the Iraqi army, a confrontation they have tried to avoid repeatedly," Al Qadisiyah said.

It said Iraq would make the battlefield "a place for a real massacre, and we will not give them the opportunity to remove their dead from the pools of blood in which they will float."

Al Qadisiyah said U.S. President George Bush was deluded if he imagines bombardment will cause Iraq to capitulate.

"We will accept nothing other than victory because it is the sole reality which is bound to guarantee our people's life and the honour and dignity of Iraq and the Arab Nation," the newspaper said.

President Bush said he would not allow Iraq to stampede him into a premature and potentially blood ground campaign.

Mr. Bush also consoled the

wives and children of airmen downed by Iraq and promised families of front-line infantry troops that a ground war will "only begin if necessary and when we decide the time is right."

"We will conduct this conflict on our terms, on our timetable, not on Saddam Hussein's timetable," Mr. Bush said before a flag-waving audience composed mostly of families of members of the 24th infantry brigade mechanised, now on duty in the Gulf.

With more than 500,000 Americans deployed overseas, Mr. Bush told the families at home. "I know it's been tough, it may get tougher," he cited two families at Fort Stewart — one with three children, the other with two — in which both the father and mother were serving in the Gulf.

Pentagon officials said Iraqi troops in Kuwait were still an effective fighting force despite the allied air assault.

"We have not written off the Iraqi army as a fighting force. We respect it," said army Lieutenant-General Tom Kelly, chief of joint operations for the Joint Chiefs of Staff (JCS).

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U.S. concedes loss

Combined agency dispatches

TWO AMERICAN planes were shot down Saturday in the war with Iraq, the U.S. military command said.

The planes were identified as an A-10 and an A-6, said Major-General Robert Johnston of the U.S. central command.

He was speaking at a military briefing in Riyadh, Saudi Arabia.

He told reporters the craft were apparently hit by gunners who spotted them from the ground, rather than by electronically-operated command systems.

Search and rescue missions were going on to try to recover the pilots.

The latest crashes bring to 15 the number of U.S. planes downed in combat, according to allied figures. Five British planes, one Kuwaiti warplane and one Italian jet also have been downed since the Gulf war began Jan. 17.

Iraqi officials said Saturday morning there had been 18 bombing raids on residential areas.

There were no air raids over Baghdad Saturday morning, but before dawn there was a large explosion probably caused by a cruise missile. The site of the explosion and extent of damage could not be determined.

At least six ground-hugging Tomahawk cruise missiles fired from U.S. navy warships struck Baghdad during an hour-long barrage Friday, government officials said.

Two of them crashed in residential neighbourhoods and narrowly missed the abandoned U.S. embassy. Government officials said several people were killed or wounded by the missiles.

A military spokesman said on

(Continued on page 5)

Mourners assail U.S.

By Rana Sabbagh
Reuters

MADABA — Mourners Saturday condemned U.S. President George Bush over the charred corpses of three Jordanian oil truck drivers killed in air raids on the Iraqi highway to Jordan.

"Down with Bush... down with America..." shouted more than 200 mourners, all men, as coffins draped in Jordanian flags were taken in ambulances from the mortuary of a military hospital in Amman for burial at three separate sites.

"God make Iraq victorious," "O Saddam don't care, we are ready" to avenge, the mourners chanted, in the freezing cold.

In Madaba, 35 kilometres south of Amman, the family and friends of dead driver Mohammad Mghazee, a 45-year-old father of 11 children, gathered at a small Muslim cemetery.

As Mghazee's body was lowered into his grave, local religious leaders continued cursing the United States and its allies for attacking Iraq.

"God save us from Bush, from (French President Francois) Mitterrand, from (British Prime Minister John) Major and from all the Arab tyrants who have sent their troops to join the infidels attacking Iraq," said Sheikh Suleiman Abu Ghali.

Foreign Minister Taher Al Masri this week accused U.S. and allied planes bombing Iraq of knowingly hitting Jordanian tanker trucks and civilian cars inside Iraq.

Police said five Jordanians, not four as officials earlier reported, and one Egyptian were killed in air attacks on the highway on Tuesday and Wednesday.

One Jordanian was buried on Friday and the body of another was still in Iraq.

The U.S. State Department has said it regretted any civilian casualties in the war to drive Iraq from Kuwait but could not

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A scene from the site of an allied air attack in the governorate of Al Anbar (Al Qadisiya)

King meets Japanese team

AMMAN (Petra) — His Majesty King Hussein received at the Royal Court Saturday a Japanese parliamentary delegation headed by Deputy Toshio Yamaguchi, chairman of the ruling Liberal Democratic Party's (LDP) economic adaptation committee and of the parliament's Foreign Economic Affairs Committee.

Mr. Yamaguchi and the delegation members reviewed the situation in the Gulf region and voiced their appreciation of King Hussein's endeavours to resolve the crisis peacefully. They expressed hope that a ceasefire can be secured and a peaceful settlement of the crisis can be achieved.

King Hussein briefed the delegation on the dangers threatening the region in case of continued war and the role Jordan played to avert the war before it broke out.

The delegation members explained to the King the Japanese point of view on the crisis and lauded Jordan's humanitarian role in assisting evacuees coming from Iraq and Kuwait.

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Jordan rejects U.S. contention oil imports violate embargo

Kingdom determined to defend airspace

By P.V. Vivekanand
Jordan Times Staff Reporter

AMMAN — Jordanian officials Sunday rejected American charges that the Kingdom's imports of Iraqi oil in lieu of Baghdad's debts to Amman constituted a violation of the international sanctions against Iraq.

The officials also reaffirmed that Jordan would defend its sovereignty and territorial integrity and would not permit any party to violate its airspace regardless of what Israel has to say about it.

"As a sovereign state, we will not allow anyone to cross our airspace and territory," said a senior official referring to a "warning" to Jordan issued by the chief of Israel's air force Friday saying that the Kingdom's air force would better stay out of the Jewish state's warplanes used Jordanian airspace to strike at Iraq in retaliation for Iraqi missile strike against Israeli cities.

"It is an escalation of rhetoric," said the official referring to the statement by Major-General Avihu Bin-Nun. "It is more of a political statement. They (Israel) want to say that they have the capability and they would not allow anyone to escape punishment for attacking them."

But, the official reaffirmed,

"we cannot tell them 'you have frightened us... so go ahead and pass...'"

In any event, the official added, "we still don't know what the Israeli air force can add to the American or (the allied) air force that is hitting very hard" at Iraq.

The official also said Jordan was trying "very hard to stay out of war" despite "pressures from both inside and outside."

"One is pulling this way and the other one is pulling the other way," he said in reference to popular sentiments in support for Iraq in its confrontation with the American-led coalition of 28 countries. "Everybody should understand that it is important for the stability of the area to keep Jordan politically stable. If Jordan goes one way or the other that will not be in the interests of stability in the region."

Jordan's rejection of the American contention that Amman was violating sanctions against Iraq by buying oil from its eastern neighbour came from another highly placed source.

"Jordan has always understood and maintained that the importation of oil and oil derivatives from Iraq without payment in cash was not a violation of the U.N. sanctions," said the source.

"Sanctions are not an end in themselves but a means to an

end, namely bringing pressure on the state against which sanctions are ordered," the source pointed out. "It is no secret that Jordan, which has not been left with suitable alternate sources to secure oil for its domestic oil needs, was obtaining its oil from Iraq because otherwise its economy will come to a standstill," added the source, preferring anonymity.

The comment came in direct response to a statement made by Margaret Tutwiler, a State Department spokeswoman, who said Friday that the U.S. administration viewed Jordan's import of oil from Iraq as a "clear violation" of Security Council Resolution 661, which imposed economic sanctions against Iraq for its Aug. 2 invasion of Kuwait.

The statement followed allied air attacks on oil tankers bound for Jordan last week. At least nine tankers were attacked Tuesday and Wednesday and five Jordanians and one Egyptian were killed and at least 12 others were wounded in the attacks, carried out between the Iraqi desert town of Al Rutba and the border post of Al Trebil, 75 kilometres northeast of the Jordanian border at Al Ruweished.

Jordan would be committing

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Hammadi ends Iran visit; speaker says Tehran will enter conflict if Israel does

Combined agency dispatches

A SENIOR IRAQI official ended a visit to Tehran Saturday, one day after a senior Iranian official said Iran's neutrality in the Gulf war could change if Israel attacked Iraq.

As Iraqi Deputy Prime Minister Saadoun Hammadi headed home, President Ali Akbar Hashemi Rafsanjani was quoted as describing the Gulf war as "the most saddening tragedy of today's humanity."

The Iranian news agency IRNA quoted Mr. Hammadi as saying his talks with Mr. Rafsanjani and Foreign Minister Ali

Akbar Velayati were "good and fruitful."

Mr. Velayati told Tehran Radio that during lengthy talks, Mr. Hammadi was told that Iran's neutrality dictated that Iraqi warplanes — said by U.S.-led allies to number to 100 military aircraft including some of Baghdad's most advanced fighters and bombers which flew to Iran last week — should remain in Iran until the end of the war.

A senior Iranian official said last week that by sending its combat planes to Iran, Iraq probably wanted to preserve them from destruction until a ground offensive started.

Mr. Rafsanjani, saying he would do anything to end the Gulf war, also sent a message to Iraqi leader Saddam Hussein Saturday on ways to halt the conflict.

IRNA said Mr. Rafsanjani handed the message to Mr. Hammadi.

"The only solution to the war is an Iraqi withdrawal from Kuwait and the withdrawal of all foreign forces from the region," IRNA quoted the president as telling Mr. Hammadi.

"It is saddening to witness the ruining of human and material resources of Muslim states in destructive wars... Iran will not

hesitate to do whatsoever in its capacity to bring the current crisis to its end."

Mr. Hammadi flew to the western Iranian city of Bakhtaran to cross back to Iraq by land, the same route he took to Tehran Thursday, IRNA said.

Iran's deputy parliament speaker warned Friday that Iran would abandon its neutrality and fight alongside Iraq if Israel is dragged into the Gulf conflict.

"If Israel is stupid enough to respond to Iraqi missile attacks, then the (Iranian) leader and officials of the Islamic Republic

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Oil slick hits Saudi coast; another spreads

DHAHRAN (R) — History's largest oil slick, oozing down from Kuwait, has hit Saudi Arabia's northeast coast, polluting miles of sandy beach, and a second slick coming from Iraq, has grown dramatically, officials said Saturday.

The main slick, 100 kilometres long and carrying the equivalent of three supertanker cargoes, already spells catastrophe for marine life in the shallow waterway.

Kilometres of beach between Jafayyah in the north and Tanajib in the south are now heavily polluted... there are also heavy oil patches offshore, a Gulf-based expert said Saturday.

A U.S. official monitoring the pollution said the second slick, coming from Iraq's Mina Al Bakr

terminal near the mouth of the Shatt Al Arab waterway, was now the size of the first.

The second slick is now 48 miles (76 kilometres) long and eight miles (12.6 kilometres) wide. It's still growing but very slowly... we don't believe it's being deliberately pumped in and it may not be as thick as the first spill," he said.

Allied forces say Iraq deliberately caused the main slick by dumping an estimated 11 million barrels of crude from storage tanks and ships at Kuwait's Mina Al Ahmadi terminal. U.S. planes bombed the Kuwaiti terminal a week ago to destroy pump controls and staunch the flow.

Iraq blames the disaster on allied air raids. A southerly wind halted the

main slick's advance Friday, pushing it offshore and raising hopes it would miss the Saudi coast. The wind changed later in the day, allowing normal current to take over.

Officials say traces of oil have begun appearing in the sea 20 kilometres north of Jubail, a port where industrial facilities threatened by the slick are located.

Authorities at Jubail have put triple layers of booms and skimmers in the lagoon to defend a 200-million-gallon (800 million litre) a day desalination plant which supplies three-quarters of the drinking water for the Saudi capital Riyadh.

"We hope that we don't have to shut down the desalination plant. We are optimistic that the

slick will pass us by and we will stay in business," an official said. "The slick was not expected to arrive before Monday," he said.

A 250,000 barrel-per-day refinery, a power plant and a huge petrochemical complex at Jubail are also threatened, environmental officials said Saturday.

Military sources in London last Wednesday accused Iraq of pumping oil into the second slick from its Mina Al Bakr terminal.

U.S. military officials say the cause of that leak is not clear.

Environmental experts said oil from Iraq could move south and pollute Kuwait Bay — an important fishing area and site of the only desalination plant in the emirate which escaped the previous spill.

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Palestinians hungry for news on Gulf war

By Arthur Max
The Associated Press

OCCUPIED WEST BANK — Like everywhere in the Middle East, radios in the West-Bank are constantly tuned to news of the Gulf war.

By day, the Palestinians listen to Iraqi or Jordanian stations broadcasting depictions of Iraq's steadfast resistance to the U.S.-led alliance.

As dusk falls the dials turn to Israel Radio, which broadcasts the air raid sirens whenever Iraq jobs a missile at Israel.

An Iraqi Scud missile whooshed over Palestinian villages in the occupied West Bank Thursday, tracing a red streak through the rain and exploding with a harmless flash in an open field.

Israeli military censorship prohibited giving the location of the impact or other details that might permit Iraq to adjust the aim of its missiles.

It was the second time a missile fell short of Tel Aviv and landed in the West Bank, where one million Palestinians live.

The first rocket also caused no casualties, but the two incidents have tempered the Palestinians' support for Iraq with a fear of falling accidental victims to Iraq's attacks.

"Of course we are afraid. Next time it could hit our village. Why not?" said Khalid, a truck driver who was waiting at an Israeli

roadblock Friday while soldiers tramped through mud looking for where the missile landed the night before.

"I go to Tel Aviv every day at four in the morning to pick up goods. Do you think my wife isn't afraid? She tells me I should wait until daylight."

The Gulf war began like a ray of hope for the Palestinians, who were frustrated by the political impasse that continues in spite of their three-year uprising against Israel's occupation.

Iraqi President Saddam Hussein held out a promise of movement, however, when he tried to link the Arab-Israeli conflict with the Gulf crisis.

"When the crisis started everyone bought a new radio. We are listening all the time. We even sleep with the radio on," said Hosni Nafah, a bank employee.

"We listen to radio Monte Carlo, to Jordan, to Iraq, to the BBC, to Israel. This one lies about that one and that one lies about the other one. We don't know what's going on," he said.

In the meantime, expectations have faded that the Gulf war will bring any changes for the Palestinians.

"It's been the same since 1948," the year Israel was created and the Arabs and Israelis fought their first of five wars, said Nafah. "All talk, but nobody does anything. Power can do whatever it wants," he said.

MIDDLE EAST NEWS IN BRIEF

U.N. to decide on Iraqi request

UNITED NATIONS (AP) — The United Nations will decide next week whether it is safe to send U.N. personnel into Iraq to determine whether the war-stricken nation needs humanitarian aid, officials said Friday. Secretary-General Javier Perez de Cuellar will meet Monday with James Grant, the director of the U.N. Children's Fund, and throughout the week with senior officials of the World Health Organisation and other relief agencies, said U.N. spokesman Francois Giuliani. In response to an Iraqi request for relief aid, the two agencies said last week that they would look into the situation as soon as they could safely send staff members to Iraq. Iraq has asked the Security Council's sanctions committee for permission to send food aid, mainly powdered milk and infant formula, to Iraqi civilians. Distribution of the aid would be supervised by the Iranian Red Crescent, that country's equivalent of the Red Cross. The sanctions committee said it needed a determination from the secretary-general on whether Iraq required assistance.

Hanoi newspaper: Bush wants to rule Gulf

HANOI (R) — Nhan Dan, the official newspaper of Vietnam's Communist Party, said Saturday Washington's aims in the Gulf war were to seize control of the oil-rich region and eradicate Iraq's military might. "The United States' target is not only 'liberation of Kuwait' but... also to exterminate the Iraqi administration, military strength and President Saddam Hussein himself," it said in the strongest attack on the United States since the war broke out. Nhan Dan's coverage of the Gulf fighting has been generally neutral. The government, which says it is neutral in the war, has urged both sides to seek peace. "The second U.S. target in this war is to control the oil-rich area in the Gulf, which produces more than 30 per cent of the world oil output, in order to manipulate Japan and its West European allies which depend on Gulf oil," the daily added.

Iraq criticises India

NICOSIA (R) — Iraq said Saturday that India should abandon its "unfriendly course" and not allow any more U.S. transport planes, being used in the allied Gulf war effort, to refuel in Bombay. "We received with great surprise and regret the report that Indian authorities allowed 38 U.S. C-141 planes to refuel at Bombay airport under the flimsy pretext that these planes are not carrying weapons or destructive equipment, but are used for humanitarian purposes," a Foreign Ministry statement said. "While we reject this unfriendly course followed by the Delhi authorities, we also reject the pretext given and demand the Indian government should not repeat such behaviour," said the statement, broadcast by Baghdad Radio monitored in Cyprus. It said India's "behaviour... completely contradicts the non-aligned policy of India, one of the founding countries of the Non-Aligned Movement." India is trying to bring together leading members of the 102-nation Non-Aligned Movement to formulate a peace initiative on the Gulf war which started on Jan. 17. "What kind of humanitarian task is this that is carried out by the U.S. planes of death? Is the killing of innocents and the shelling of civilian, economic, religious, educational, and health centres listed under the conditions of humanity?" the Iraqi statement said.

Belgium denies ransom report

BRUSSELS (R) — Belgium Saturday denied a report it paid a top Palestinian guerrilla \$3 million in ransom when he visited Brussels hours before the Gulf war began. The Flemish daily Het Laatste Nieuws, quoting "a foreign ministry source," said a senior diplomat gave 100 million francs (\$3.3 million) to Fatah Revolutionary Council (FRC) spokesman Walid Khaled following the release of a Belgian family held hostage since 1987. "Foreign Minister Mark Eyskens formally denies the report according to which 100 million francs were paid as a ransom for the release of the Houeik family," the Foreign Ministry said in a terse statement. The scandal over Mr. Khaled, detained by Brussels police after he was spotted in the city's main square on Jan. 16, has deeply embarrassed Belgium's coalition government.

S. African Muslims want to aid Iraq

DURBAN, South Africa (AP) — A Muslim group has asked the government for permission to transfer 2 million rand (\$800,000) to an overseas bank to help Iraq, the South African Broadcasting Corporation (SABC) reported. A spokesman for the group told the SABC that international sanctions imposed against Iraq after its Aug. 2 invasion of Kuwait had led to rampant disease and malnutrition. He said the money would be used to provide food and baby milk for Iraqis. There was no immediate government comment on the request, which would require approval from the South African foreign exchange. The government has supported the U.S.-led alliance fighting Iraq and offered use of its air bases and harbours to U.S. planes and ships.

Police detain Syrian after fire

MASSA, Italy (R) — Police said they detained a Syrian Friday on suspicion of being the man who claimed responsibility for a fire at a northern Italian port this week. Police did not give the man's name but said he was aged 29 and came from Damascus. He had lived for several months near the north-west Italian port of Massa and worked for local marble quarries. Thursday's fire destroyed more than 1,000 tonnes of engine oil and other goods in storage tanks at Massa and halted port operations. The Italian news agency ANSA reported that a man speaking with a foreign accent telephoned its Florence office, claimed responsibility for the fire and threatened other attacks.

AFP to sue Pentagon

PARIS (R) — The French news agency Agence France-Presse (AFP) said Friday it was taking legal action in the United States against the Pentagon for excluding it from U.S. Defence Department press pools. An AFP statement quoted the agency's lawyer, Joshua Kaufman, as saying a denial of access to the pools breached the first amendment of the American constitution guaranteeing freedom of expression. "We intend to seek temporary and permanent injunction against the DoD (Department of Defence), enjoining them from continuing to illegally bar AFP from its pools and denying them access to pool materials," Mr. Kaufman said. AFP said it was currently being denied access to news pictures of the Gulf war from DoD pools in Saudi Arabia. "AFP has sought access to these pools for several years and has been denied. No reason has ever been provided. There are no standards or criteria for pool participation. The decisions are arbitrarily made without any avenue for appeal or recourse," the statement said.

King Hassan warns pro-Iraqis

RABAT (AP) — King Hassan has warned pro-Iraqi groups to immediately halt demands to withdraw the 1,200 troops Morocco has contributed to the multinational coalition in Saudi Arabia.

The king, under mounting pressure by opposition political parties and trade unions, said in a nationally broadcast speech Friday that the consultation gives him the right to send troops where he wishes.

"Those who in the future criticise the presence of the Moroccan army in Saudi Arabia will have the law applied against them," King Hassan said. "The law is clear."

Moroccan law makes it a crime punishable by fines or imprisonment to criticise the presence of the army in a foreign country. Such criticism is thought to harm morale.

King Hassan stressed that the Moroccan contingent acts independently of other foreign forces in Saudi Arabia and is confined to a purely defensive position, 55 kilometres from the combat area.

The address came hours after the National Committee for Solidarity with the Iraqi People, composed of trade unions and opposition parties, demanded that the troops be withdrawn.

The committee urged an immediate ceasefire in the Gulf war, the withdrawal of all foreign troops, and nationwide campaigns to collect blood, medicine and food for Iraq.

The appeal was the latest in daily expressions of solidarity with Iraq by opposition parties and newspapers. The journal Al Alam on Friday urged Moroccans to boycott French goods.

The delegation was received Thursday by Minister of Planning Khalid Amin Abdullah, who discussed with the delegation members and 11 assistants and officials.

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Peres still hopes for peace talks

VIENNA (R) — Israeli opposition leader Shimon Peres said Friday he still hoped for peace talks with Palestinians despite guerrilla rocket attacks in the Jewish state's self-proclaimed "security zone" in South Lebanon.

"I do hope that there will be courageous Palestinian leaders who will come up and say the time has come to sit down and make peace because I believe the Palestinian problem cannot be solved by missiles or bombs," Mr. Peres told a news conference.

Mr. Peres said the attacks drove even the most moderate Israeli politicians to the conclusion that it had been a mistake to support peace talks with the Palestinian Liberation Organisation (PLO) which Palestinians regard as their sole representative.

Mr. Peres, leader of the Israel Labour Party, spoke during a break in a Socialist International

presidium meeting on the Gulf crisis.

He said PLO Chairman Yasser Arafat was the main obstacle for Palestinians to come to terms with the Israeli state.

"I think that Arafat is not the sole representative of Palestinians but the sole obstacle for Palestinians to make a peaceful solution," Mr. Peres said.

Palestinian guerrillas fired Katyusha rockets in the zone on Friday for the fourth day. Mr. Arafat, who backs Iraq in the Gulf war, has denied ordering the attacks.

Israel regards them as a PLO attempt to open a symbolic second front in the Gulf war and threatens tough retaliation.

Its northern army commander, Major-General Yossi Peled, said Friday Israel would not be dragged into prolonged fighting in the buffer zone. "It should be clear that we don't intend to be dragged into a gradual escalation but that we will end it and immediately," Gen. Peled told Israel Radio Friday.

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"We feel Muslims being killed and their resources destroyed through an arrogant plot with international justification. Unfortunately, this condition arose from a wrong and miscalculated move, providing an opportunity for enemies of Islam," the radio quoted Mr. Rafsanjani as saying.

"The hands of Muslims themselves are also at work and the mischief originated from Islamic countries. This shows lack of maturity and realism," Mr. Rafsanjani said.

Mr. Hammadi told Tehran Radio that he had briefed Iranian officials on "the conditions in Iraq, the destructive war which has begun against us and regional problems."

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Volunteers to the People's Army come from all different walks of life (File photo)

Thousands volunteer to defend nation

By Samia Nakhoul
Reuters

AMMAN — Artist Wassef Iwafi has laid down his brush and is learning to use a gun along with thousands of Jordanians who want to defend their country and, if possible, fight or defend Iraq.

"I feel threatened ... the rush won't do me any good in war time. It won't defend me or my country," Mwafi, 35, said during a break in paramilitary training in Amman with Jordan's volunteer Popular Army.

Jordanian officials on Wednesday said 320,000 men and women had volunteered for the country's Popular Army since the Gulf crisis began on Aug. 2.

The volunteers, aged between 16 and 55, include doctors, engineers, lawyers, labourers and industrialists.

The Popular Army was founded in 1985 as a national defence force to back up the regular army in any attack on Jordan.

Its volunteer ranks have more than doubled since the

start of war between Iraq and U.S.-led forces, in a reflection of strong patriotic and pro-Iraqi sentiment.

"People feel threatened, especially since all the countries surrounding Jordan are armed with sophisticated weapons and have fierce armies," Brigadier Ghazi Al Tayeb, commander of the People's Army, told Reuters.

He said he had been forced to quadruple the number of training courses to cope with the flood of volunteers since war started on Jan. 17 and keep up their "enthusiasm and drive."

"The average was 10 sessions every two months now it is 20 sessions every month," Tayeb said. Volunteers were put on standby after they completed training but were not given guns.

Mwafi and his comrades, clad in brown army fatigues, are following a five-week course in civil defence, first aid and protection against chemical warfare.

As a back-up to the 100,000-man regular army, they also learn to use light and medium

weapons, dig trenches, fortify positions and guard government installations and buildings.

"What is happening now is an onslaught against our culture and civilisation. They (the allied forces) want to turn Baghdad into a graveyard. The West wants to be the master of this world and we refuse to be slaves," Mwafi said.

Talal Abu Rayala, a 40-year-old civil engineer and father of three, explained why he wanted to fight for Baghdad.

"If Iraq is defeated then we will all fall. There will be no security in Jordan, Syria, Egypt or any other Arab country ... there will be instability everywhere," he said.

Many Jordanians and Palestinians have also gone to Iraq's embassy in Amman, pleading to be taken to the war front.

"We want to become martyrs. We want to die. We are you preventing us this honour?" Khaled Al Abadi asked an embassy official. "Every time I come here you tell me not yet ... when are you going to take us?"

Palestinians, who see Saddam as a champion of their rights, are also flocking to the Palestinian National Council (PNC) offices in Amman to register to fight.

Hamdi Tabaa, head of a 20-man private committee raising funds for the People's Army, said his group had collected JD 150,000 (\$230,000) in under two weeks. Banks have also opened accounts for donations.

"There is not a single household in Jordan which is not doing something for Iraq. Everybody, despite different political affiliations, religion or class, is united in one thing — Iraq's victory and to defend Jordan," Tabaa said.

Although most volunteers were aware their military skills fell behind allied standards, they said the image that the United States and its allies were invincible had gone.

"A crushing war led by what they call the greatest power in the world has been going on for two weeks and Iraq is still resisting," said volunteer Ahmad Tabshat, a 42-year-old lawyer.

Queen Noor receives Japanese delegation

AMMAN (J.T.) — Her Majesty Queen Noor Saturday received members of the Japanese Liberal Democratic Party's group for evacuee relief who are currently visiting Jordan. The Queen briefed the delegation on the current situation of the evacuees and on the impact of the Gulf war on Jordan's economic and human development processes. Queen Noor also discussed with the Japanese groups ways to support Jordanian income-generating schemes and to help combat poverty and safeguard the health and nutritional status of women and children. The Queen expressed Jordan's appreciation of Japan's assistance to the Kingdom during these hard times. The meeting was attended by Japanese ambassador to Jordan Tadayuki Nonoyama, head of the evacuees welfare committee Salamah Hammad and Noor Al Hussein Foundation's Director General Inasam Al Mufli.

Christian, Muslim leaders meet

AMMAN (J.T.) — Heads of Christian communities in Jordan Saturday voiced their keenness on cooperation with the government in matters designed to enhance the sense of national belonging and national unity, and lauded the Ministry of Awqaf and Islamic Affairs efforts in this regard.

Bishop Salim Al Sayegh of the Roman Catholic Church, Bishop Elia Khouri of the Anglican Church and Monsignor Raouf Najjar, representative of the Apostolic delegation in Jordan voiced their support for the ministry during a meeting with Minister of Awqaf and Islamic Affairs Ibrahim Zeid Kilani. They told the minister that they appreciated his mosque sermons in which he advocated cohesion

among the Jordanian family and solid support for the Jordanian leadership.

Discussion during the meeting dealt with the looming danger which threatens the existence of all Jordanians. They explored means of consolidating national unity and thwarting any attempt to cause splits within Jordanian ranks.

Earlier, Kilani chaired a meeting of mosque preachers and stressed the need to bolster and increase public awareness in spiritual and national unity matters in view of the crucial circumstances facing the Arab and Islamic nations. Chief Islamic Justice Sheikh Mohammad Mheilan and the Kingdom's mufti were among those attending the meeting.

Algerian doctors arrive in Baghdad

AMMAN (J.T.) — A group of 16 Algerian doctors arrived Saturday in Baghdad as a first batch of 400 Algerian physicians and specialists who have volunteered to offer medical assistance to the injured in Iraq as a result of the ongoing American-led aggression on the Arab country.

Earlier, doctors from Jordan, Tunisia and Palestine were sent to Iraq on the same humanitarian mission; and doctors from Libya and Morocco are expected to follow soon, according to the Amman-based Arab Doctors' Union (ADU).

A spokesman for the ADU's health committee which is organising the missions said the union had earlier issued an appeal to all Arab states to send doctors and specialists to offer assistance to injured civilians in Iraq.

The spokesman said that the Iraqi national Red Crescent Society takes charge of the operations inside Iraq, distributing the volunteer doctors to various hospitals.

Upon their arrival in Amman en route to Baghdad Friday afternoon, the Algerian doctors expressed their readiness to do all they can to help the Iraqi people. They all voiced absolute support for the Iraqis in their steadfastness and in repelling aggression on Iraqi territory; and said they felt it an honour to offer humanitarian assistance to their brothers and sisters now subjected to the U.S.-led aggression on the Arab Nation. The doctors denounced the stand of Arab states allied with U.S. and urged Arab doctors and nurses to offer assistance to the injured civilians.

Alawneh reviews agricultural policy

AMMAN (J.T.) — Minister of Agriculture Mohammad Alawneh Saturday said the government was ready to deal with problems facing agricultural exports of vegetables and fruits and that efforts are continuing to open the way for importing certain products since competition would bring down the prices and benefit the consumers.

The minister was addressing a meeting held at the Amman central vegetable market attended by exporters and middlemen. He reviewed with them the export-import process and problems facing the merchants.

Discussion during the meeting also focused on the idea of confining the process of importing vegetables and other products to one corporation or company, but no decision was taken in this respect.

According to the Jordan News Agency, Petra, the exporters and middlemen proposed that they

be represented at meetings related to the agricultural sector so that their views could be taken into consideration. The minister promised to study the proposal.

Since the closure of Gulf Arab countries' markets in the face of Jordanian produce, the government has been seeking new markets in Africa and Europe. Most of the Jordan's agricultural products used to go to Saudi Arabia and Kuwait before the Gulf crisis began last August.

Alawneh was reported earlier to have said that his ministry was trying to help the local farmers market their milk and stressed that a ban on the importation of dried powdered milk that had been used in the dairy industry will continue.

The minister urged dairy plants to use the locally produced milk for increased production of cheese and yoghurt which can easily be marketed in the Kingdom.

Foreign wives decry aggression

By Odeh Odeh
Special to the Jordan Times

AMMAN — A group of foreign women married to Jordanians Saturday expressed their disgust at the continuing aggression on Iraq and said they were ashamed of their countries for launching aggression on an Arab country, killing innocent civilians.

The group of American, Australian and Italian women, some of whom had been to Baghdad and had witnessed the effects of raids on civilian targets, spoke to journalists at Amman Hotel, strongly denouncing the raids as a mad and outrageous aggression on civilians, and calling on the troops and pilots to refuse orders, and thus bring about a ceasefire.

Our countries shamefully spend billions of dollars on a war to kill people while millions of their countrymen suffer from hunger, unemployment and homelessness, the woman said in a statement.

Mrs. Rosemary Budeir an American housewife and mother of three said that she was ashamed of U.S. President George Bush and his government which brag about democracy and deploy a formidable war machine to kill the people of a small country like Iraq.

The majority of Americans would be against this war should they have access to the real losses and the facts from an uncensored press, Mrs. Budeir asserted. She expressed deep sorrow for the American troops blood being shed to satisfy the desires of a handful of politicians and capitalists, and described Iraqi President Saddam Hussein as a brave man who stood up to the conspiracy aimed at humiliating the Iraqi people.

Air raids slow down flow of evacuees

By P.V. Vivekanand

Jordan Times Staff Reporter

AMMAN — The flow of foreigners, mostly Arabs and Asians, fleeing the Gulf war zone to Jordan has slowed to a trickle again after a surge following Iraq's relaxation of exit formalities imposed after the outbreak of hostilities on Jan. 17.

Less than 500 refugees had crossed into the Kingdom by noon Saturday, among their group of Indian nurses, dependents whose arrival ended weeks of speculation and anxiety in India over their whereabouts, witnesses said.

According to Jordanian officials and representatives of international relief agencies, the shortage of fuel in Iraq, whose refineries have been hit in the allied bombing raids which began Jan. 17, and fears of getting caught in the air assaults seem to be the main reason behind the slowdown.

Several non-Arabs who arrived here Friday reported seeing wreckage of bombed-out vehicles on the main Baghdad-Amman highway, including some hit by direct machine gunfire.

"There cannot be any mistake about it," said William Brown, an American activist who was visiting Iraq in a bid to avert war. "The marks on the road and some of the vehicles leave no doubt that the attacks involved machine-guns from low-flying aircraft," said Mr. Brown, who has served in the American marine corps and saw combat in Vietnam.

Fears of attack during the journey to the border from the Iraqi capital were proved real last week when it was confirmed by the foreign minister, Mr. Taber Al Mawad, who told "Parliament" that at least 10 oil tankers and scores of other vehicles bound for Jordan were hit in "barbaric" attacks.

Meanwhile, charter flights arranged by the International Organisation for Migration (IOM) continued. Two flights carrying about 550 Asians — Indians, Pakistanis, Sri Lankans and Bangladeshis — flew to Bombay and Dhaka Thursday.

EC to finance 12 evacuee flights

AMMAN (J.T.) — The European Community has agreed to finance the operation of 12 charter flights to repatriate Asian and Sudanese evacuees from Jordan. All flights will be chartered and coordinated by the International Organisation for Migration (IOM), IOM said in a statement.

The decision was announced Saturday in Amman by EC Ambassador Christian Falkowski.

Two daily Royal Jordanian flights carrying 139 passengers each have been operating since Jan. 29 from Queen Alia airport to Khartoum, explained IOM's Chief of Mission, Peter Schatzler. In addition, two Aeroflot flights were utilised to repatriate approximately 600 Asian nationals from Aqaba to Bombay.

Two more flights from Amman to India were scheduled for Saturday and Sunday. With these flights the U.N.-coordinated rescue operation will evacuate all nationals from the Indian sub-continent presently in transit in Jordan. The last group will include 125 Indian nurses who arrived from Iraq Saturday.

Arrangements are also being made for the repatriation of more than 150 Vietnamese nurses who have arrived in Jordan after a first attempt to leave Iraq several days ago had been unsuccessful.

Friday and another flight was leaving Saturday.

It was also announced Saturday that the European Community was financing 12 charter flights for Asian evacuees.

A Japanese delegation was in Amman discussing possibilities of sending Japanese military planes to fly home the evacuees. The issue of sending military planes is a very controversial issue in Tokyo since many see it as setting a precedent and as a forerunner for some of Japanese military engagement in the Gulf against the country's constitution.

However, a senior official indicated that Jordan had not received any official Japanese request to allow military planes to land in the Kingdom. But, he said, Jordan had no objection in principle to grant landing rights to such aircraft as long as they would be used to transport evacuees.

"The controversy in Tokyo is a Japanese problem," said the official, speaking on condition of anonymity. "In principle we do not have anything against granting the planes landing rights as long as they would be used to carry home refugees."

According to official figures, 3,762 evacuees remained in Jordan as of Saturday morning awaiting flights home. These included 1,430 Sudanese, 415 Yemenis, 270 Indians, 150 Vietnamese, 75 Bangladeshis, 68 Egyptians and 310 other nationalities.

The figures also indicated that at least 60 Somali nationals who had sought help from the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) had left, presumably for home. Over 450 Somalis were awaiting UNHCR help for alternate refuge in light of the civil war in their country. The civil war appeared to have ebbed last week with President Mohammad Siad Barre fleeing the country, but fear of renewed fighting remained after several of the factions which made up the main force which ousted him started political bickering among themselves.

Eyewitnesses tell the story of Baghdad

By Mariam M. Shabin
Jordan Times Staff Reporter

AMMAN — War and its horrors come to follow some people and wherever they go. And it is a constant reality for the Lebanese and Sudanese refugees from Iraq who are now used at the Andalus refugee camp outside Amman.

All the 150 Vietnamese nurses arrived here last Thursday, most of the 100 Sudanese are housed in Al Andalus waiting to fly home, have war es from Iraq to tell. "I heard of many families that were killed in Baghdad during the bombing," said Ahmad Mohamad Hassan from Khartoum. He men were not there to bury m, so the neighbours had to that," he told the Jordanians.

Hassan is an auto mechanic, o along with many of his comrades had witnessed long years conflict in his own country. He d when "the sky lit up," over ghad he was not scared. "I

used to stand on the roof to watch the bombardment while the rest of the people hid in the shelters," he calmly said.

"Many areas in my neighbourhood were hit, but were not completely destroyed. Baghdad is mostly full of women and children. It takes a lot more to destroy the city," he said.

"I was not afraid because if I die I will go to heaven. When an American kills you, your place is in heaven because God is with us and not with the devil ... I am not afraid," Hassan insisted.

He said he and his Sudanese colleagues, who arrived here Tuesday, would return to Baghdad to resume work there.

One Vietnamese staff nurse who had lived through the Vietnam war and who had experienced U.S. bombardment of her home town in Vietnam said that she too had "not been afraid" when the bombers hit the holy city of Al Najaf on Jan. 19.

"I was not afraid but I was surprised. No one thought that Al

Najaf would be hit because it is a holy city," said Vo Kem Ngoc.

While Ngoc could not give an estimate of how many people had died on that day in Al Najaf, she could tell exactly what she saw.

"I work in the Saddam Hospital and on that night 12 people died in my hospital from the bombing and we treated about 30 injuries," said Ngoc.

There are five other hospitals in Al Najaf and, according to Ngoc, about 50 people died in those hospitals on the night of Jan. 19.

The people in Al Najaf said the staff nurses "had not prepared themselves for war simply because they believed that they would be spared in this war. Again and again Ngoc repeated to the Jordan Times, "it's a holy city, it's a holy city."

According to Ngoc and other Vietnamese nurses who had been stationed in Baghdad, medicine is becoming more scarce and hygienic conditions are continually deteriorating.

Most of the nurses who have one- or two-year contracts to work in Iraq at a salary of \$300 a month, said they would return "in a month or two after things get better."

"The Iraqis treated us very well," said nurse Nguyen Tai Tri, a maternity nurse at a Baghdad hospital. "They gave us sugar, rice, tea and fresh fruit, we will go back."

Ton Nu Thi Ha, who said she is a descendant of the last Vietnamese imperial family and who comes from Hanoi, reported that the number of women coming to the hospitals to deliver their babies had decreased since the war began. "Now there are fewer babies than before," she said.

There are over 2,000 Vietnamese from both Hanoi and Ho Chi Minh city still in Iraq and their embassy there has remained open to care for them said the refugees. Vietnamese nurses hope to get back home before Feb. 15, the Vietnamese new year's day.

ROYAL JORDANIAN

Royal Jordanian Flight Schedule

Sunday 3/2/1991

Departing flights from Amman to:

Dest.	Arrival
VIENNA	11:00 a.m. 02:00 p.m.
PARIS	11:00 a.m. 04:50 p.m.
LONDON	11:00 a.m. 05:40 p.m.
TRIPOLI	06:30 p.m. 10:30 p.m.
TUNIS	06:30 p.m. 11:40 p.m.
LARNACA	09:00 p.m. 10:30 p.m.

Arriving flights to Amman from:

Dest.	Arrival
CAIRO	03:30 a.m. 05:30 a.m.
VIENNA	03:00 p.m. 07:45 p.m.
NEW YORK	09:00 a.m. 05:45 p.m.
AMSTERDAM	11:00 a.m. 05:45 p.m.
FRANKFURT	12:25 p.m. 07:45 p.m.
VIENNA	01:00 p.m. 05:45 p.m.
MUSCAT	02:30 p.m. 10:15 p.m.

MONDAY 04/2/1991

Departing flights from Amman to:

Dest.	Arrival
MUSCAT	02:05 a.m. 02:45 p.m.
CAIRO	10:00 a.m. 12:15 p.m.
ROME	04:30 p.m. 07:30 p.m.
VIENNA	04:30 p.m. 09:15 p.m.
LARNACA	09:00 p.m. 10:30 p.m.

Arriving flights to Amman from:

Dest.	Arrival
TRIPOLI	11:30 p.m. 05:30 a.m.
TUNIS	12:40 a.m. 06:30 a.m.
CAIRO	01:00 p.m. 03:00 p.m.
LONDON	09:25 a.m. 07:45 p.m.
PARIS	12:10 p.m. 07:45 p.m.
VIENNA	03:00 p.m. 07:45 p.m.
MUSCAT	03:45 p.m. 11:30 p.m.

TUESDAY 05/2/1991

Departing flights from Amman to:

Dest.	Arrival
VIENNA	11:00 a.m. 02:00 p.m.
PARIS	11:00 a.m. 04:50 p.m.
LONDON	11:00 a.m. 05:40 p.m.
CAIRO	07:30 p.m. 09:45 p.m.

Arriving flights to Amman from:

Dest.	Arrival
LARNACA	08:00 a.m. 09:30 a.m.
VIENNA	09:00 a.m. 03:30 p.m.
ROME	10:45 a.m. 03:30 p.m.

WEDNESDAY 06/2/1991

Departing flights from Amman to:

Dest.	Arrival
VIENNA	11:15 a.m. 04:00 p.m.
LARNACA	11:15 a.m. 12:45 p.m.
CAIRO	09:00 p.m. 11:15 p.m.
TUNIS	09:00 p.m. 01:30 a.m.

Arriving flights to Amman from:

Dest.	Arrival
CAIRO	07:30 a.m. 09:30 a.m.
LONDON	09:25 a.m. 07:45 p.m.
PARIS	12:10 p.m. 07:45 p.m.
VIENNA	03:00 p.m. 07:45 p.m.

THURSDAY 07/2/1991

Departing flights from Amman to:

Dest.	Arrival
VIENNA	11:00 a.m. 02:00 p.m.
PARIS	11:00 a.m. 04:50 p.m.
LONDON	11:00 a.m. 05:40 p.m.
CAIRO	07:30 p.m. 09:45 p.m.

Arriving flights to Amman from:

Dest.	Arrival
VIENNA	11:00 a.m. 05:30 p.m.
LARNACA	04:00 p.m. 05:30 p.m.
TUNIS	02:30 a.m. 08:30 a.m.
CAIRO	06:30 a.m. 08:30 a.m.

FRIDAY 08/2/1991

Departing flights from Amman to:

Dest.	Arrival
CAIRO	08:15 p.m. 10:30 p.m.
LARNACA	09:15 p.m. 10:45 p.m.

Arriving flights to Amman from:

Dest.	Arrival
CAIRO	07:30 a.m. 09:30 a.m.
LONDON	08:25 a.m. 07:45 p.m.
PARIS	12:10 p.m. 07:45 p.m.
VIENNA	03:00 p.m. 07:45 p.m.

SATURDAY 09/2/1991

Departing flights from Amman to:

Dest.	Arrival
VIENNA	11:00 a.m. 02:00 p.m.
AMSTERDAM	11:00 a.m. 05:00 p.m.
NEW YORK	11:00 a.m. 08:00 p.m.
FRANKFURT	11:00 a.m. 04:30 p.m.
CAIRO	01:30 p.m. 03:45 p.m.
CAIRO	08:15 p.m. 10:30 p.m.

Arriving flights to Amman from:

Dest.	Arrival
CAIRO	07:30 a.m. 09:30 a.m.
LARNACA	08:00 a.m. 09:30 a.m.
LARNACA	10:00 a.m. 11:30 a.m.
CAIRO	04:45 p.m. 06:45 p.m.

Royal Jordanian would like to draw the attention of the passengers that all reconfirmation of reservations must be performed in-person together with their travel documents at the RJ office in Amman, 24 hours prior to the day of departure. Royal Jordanian would also like to inform all passengers that the timings of all departures or arrivals are subject to change without prior notice due to the prevailing circumstances. Therefore kindly contact RJ reservation office at 278221 for further clarifications. All passengers must report at Queen Alia International Airport THREE hours prior to the schedule departure. Thank you.

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Be light not fire

ONE EXPECTS a self-proclaimed superpower to be "a light unto the nations." The U.S. is certainly a superpower, but sadly it is more of a fire than light.

Consider if you will, the relationship between that huge, powerful country and a small country like Jordan. Right from the beginning of the Gulf crisis, Jordan maintained a stance that opposed the acquisition of land by force, recognised international legitimacy, abided by Security Council resolutions and, at the same time, rejected foreign intervention in the affairs of the region and the resort to force in solving regional conflicts. This Jordanian stand is based on a long tradition that Jordan applied to the other, older conflict of Lebanon, Palestine and as far back as 1961 Kuwait.

Abiding by Security Council Resolution 661 not to trade with Iraq, Jordan started importing all of its oil from Saudi Arabia on Sept. 1. Only 19 days later, the Saudis, acting in concert apparently with its "Big Brother," decided to cut the supply to Jordan on baseless grounds. With "silent" consent from the Americans, and with a waiver from the U.N. Security Council Sanctions Committee, Jordan started again to import its oil needs from Iraq, against money that country owes to the Kingdom. The arrangement went on for nearly five months, until the Americans and their allies last week bombed Jordanian oil tankers killing five Jordanians, one Egyptian and injuring 12 others.

Asked why allied jet fighters would attack Jordanian tankers, the U.S. State Department spokeswoman, Margaret Tutwiler, said Jordan was violating the Security Council's sanctions resolution. When further asked if the U.S. knew if Jordan had special permission to import oil from Iraq, Tutwiler replied: "No, we do not."

The fact that the U.S. did not know if Jordan had permission to import oil from Iraq and yet went ahead with bombing our tankers is only an indication of that superpower's disrespect and disregard for any world order, including the one it claims to defend. Had the U.S. been more responsible and less arrogant, it would have taken the trouble to check with the Security Council committee to ascertain whether Jordan was acting properly and legally before its air force killed innocent Jordanians and other civilians and destroyed their property.

Americans can continue to shoot from the hip in their own backyard if they so wish, but further irresponsible actions by their administration in this part of the world can only aggravate the already explosive situation and widen the war front irretrievably.

Jordan had all along warned against starting war against Iraq, and ever since fighting erupted the Kingdom has been urging an immediate ceasefire and the start of negotiations, not just to save Iraqi lives but American and European lives as well. That call is all the more urgent today, considering that America may be beginning to lose touch with reality and reasonableness.

ARABIC PRESS COMMENTARIES

Al Ra'i daily commented Saturday on a statement by President Bush in which he expressed his dream of achieving a quick victory over Iraq in the ongoing Gulf war, but demanded that the American people shoulder more sacrifices to achieve that victory. The paper said that Bush should realise that though he started the aggression, it is not necessary that he would be able to maintain the initiative in the battles as the latest Khafji fighting had proved. Bush has expressed his grief over the death of American soldiers in the Khafji battle, but grief can by no means save the president from facing the truth that the Americans would be losing more men and material in such a conflict, said the paper. With every day that passes by, Bush bears more and more responsibility for the death of American soldiers, said the paper. Only through peace with Iraq can Bush achieve some kind of victory by saving the lives of his troops and preventing his country from facing another Vietnam, the paper continued. But, it added, the path to peace requires a lot of courage and moral commitment, not shedding the blood of more men and women in a losing war.

A number of columnists in Al Ra'i daily commented on the government's decision to allow private cars to run on alternate days, voicing criticism and disapproval of the decision which can by no means be helpful to limited income groups. Most citizens will be faced with extreme hardships as a result of this ill-planned decision, and more money will be spent on taxis which also consume fuel at any rate, says Fakhr Kwar. The writer notes that he received 75 telephone calls from members of the public complaining that they could not by any chance abide by the new regulations for social and economic reasons, and that they all expressed dismay for hearing such decision when other plans are more feasible and applicable without causing so much inconvenience to the majority of the public. According to Kwar, whole families and their children would be facing difficulties in finding alternative means of transport which are not regular in most districts of Amman and other towns in Jordan. Most of the callers expressed support for the government's endeavours to rationalise fuel consumption, but they all suggested that goal, the writer adds.

Scenario that spells the end of the coalition

By Annika Savill

THE coalition against Iraq may be secure for now, but given a certain scenario, it will disintegrate. That risk, diplomats said yesterday, will come into play if the U.S.-led allies get Iraq out of Kuwait, but choose to continue to attack Iraq nonetheless.

British, French and Soviet diplomats conceded that such a situation would spell the end of unity among the Security Council's five permanent members. Out of the window would go France, which has more than 35 aircraft in the Gulf, the Soviet, who partook in a *pas-de-deux* of superpower unity at the start of the crisis, and China, whose allegiance was always in question.

Continuing to attack Iraq to get Iraqi forces out of Kuwait would be justifiable to Washington and London, as Tom King, the U.K. Secretary of State for Defence, outlined at the weekend, by the fact that U.N. Resolution 678 allows for all necessary means to "restore international peace and security in the area." But, said a Soviet

diplomat: "If we allow them to interpret 678 now as a mandate to destroy Iraq, what is to stop America in five years claiming the right to invade Indonesia over Timor?"

French officials recently said that if the allies were to try to attack Iraq beyond that, France would seek help from Moscow and Peking at the U.N. to halt the exercise. Britain may well argue that restoring peace and security justifies enforcing Iraq — to others, peace and security means something different.

President François Mitterrand admits privately his keen interest in prosecuting the war, as in part intended to ensure that he will be a player in its aftermath. However, Mr. Mitterrand has other priorities to address. For one, there is the 2 million to 3 million North Africans living in France — the largest Muslim community in any European country — and the 70,000 French living in France's former colonies in the Maghreb.

Peace and security in the area means, to France, addressing the

Israeli question as soon as possible. Mr. Mitterrand's men put the question over the weekend: "If America emerges after this as the power in the region, will it continue to support Israel unquestioningly or will it face up to its moral obligation?"

There may be speculation that Mr. King, in his military capacity, overstated even Britain's intentions when declaring that President Saddam's forces could not be left intact because "if we left this task half completed, so we only saw the same problems re-asserted in six months or a year's time." But a Foreign Office official said that the risk of President Saddam leaving Kuwait, while having the chance to do it all again was a real possibility, that the need to pursue him in Iraq was therefore justified; and that hence, the biggest fear was of a defection by the three dissenters in Security Council.

It was clear from the comments last weekend by the new Soviet Foreign Minister, Alexander Bessmertnykh, that Mos-

cov has some difficulty in seeing the destruction of Iraq as within the spirit of the U.N. resolutions. To Moscow, peace and security means something else again. That is, a Soviet diplomat said yesterday, reining in the influence of Iran to limit its influence over the Islamic population in the Soviet republics; preventing a weakening of the Arab states against Israel; and above all, limiting the period of a post-crisis American presence in the area that would curtail Moscow's influence in the region.

It may be surprising that all the permanent five gave their blessing to Resolution 678. Yet they had no choice, the U.N. Charter states quite clearly — in chapter 7, article 42 — that the Security Council "may take such action by air, sea or land forces as may be necessary to maintain or restore international peace and security." Granted, its authors may have foreseen the consequences. — The Independent.

Wartime? Just one big party

By Jocelyn Zablit and Remer Tyson

CAIRO, Egypt — Come night-fall in this city of more than 15 million people, the nightclubs and hotels spring alive — with Kuwaiti exiles.

The streets in front of night-spots grow crowded as fleets of new, chauffeur-driven Mercedes-Benzes discharge their Kuwaiti owners. Hotel elevators are strounded with the strong smell of perfume as Kuwaiti women, many sporting fur coats, Chanel purses and gold-and-diamond jewellery, head for another evening of Cairo night-life.

The war to liberate Kuwait may be raging in their homeland, but for many of the Kuwaitis in exile here, the party rages on.

Long among the wealthiest of the residents of the oil-rich Gulf, many of the 30,000 Kuwaitis stranded here when Iraq invaded their country are continuing to live a high life that embarrasses some Kuwaitis.

Egyptians and other Arabs have long been bitter about the ostentatious wealth of oil-rich Gulf countries, including Saudi

Arabia. But that bitterness has intensified in recent months because of what many Egyptians, with 45,000 troops on the ground in Saudi Arabia and an annual per capita income of just \$700, see as crass behaviour at a time when other countries are fighting to liberate Kuwait.

But that message has not reached everyone. On a Thursday night, which marks the beginning of the weekend in Muslim countries, 450 energetic young men and women jammed into the hot, smoky Sultan's Disco.

They crowded onto a dance floor, their hands up in the air as they stomped and gyrated to the latest Arabic and Western tunes blasting into the early morning hours.

Some of the women wore miniskirts and tight pants. Their makeup was generally heavy, and only one was seen wearing a headscarf. Most of the men, many with heavy gel on their hair, wore open-collared shirts and sport coats.

Most didn't want to talk about

their presence in Cairo.

One who did, Mohammad Al Issa, 27, began discussing his latest vacation activities in London, Bahrain and Cairo, where he has travelled since the Iraqi takeover of Kuwait on Aug. 2. Asked if he was going to casinos and nightclubs, Al Issa, who hasn't heard from his parents and three sisters in Kuwait since the invasion, said: "I go everywhere, everywhere."

But he took a different tack when two of his friends cautioned him that what he was saying might not look good in print.

After the warning, he said he spent his time listening to the news.

Some of the Kuwaiti families still have their maids, most of them Filipinos or Bangladeshis, to do chores and look after their children.

One hotel, the Ramses Hilton, offers \$565-a-day suites complete with a private, round-the-clock butler.

Gharib Abu Al Fadl, the front desk manager at the Saffir Zamalek Suites Hotel, said the

Kuwaiti-owned hotel's 104 suites had been occupied by exiles since Iraq's invasion of Kuwait.

Farahia Al Sabah, the Kuwaiti emir's sister, is among the guests staying at the Saffir.

The Kuwaiti government spokesman pointed out that hundreds of Kuwaitis were undergoing military training by the Egyptian army and that a group of 500 left last week for Saudi Arabia to join the allied forces.

He said courses were also being offered to men and women. The men are taught electronics, plumbing and auto mechanism. The women learn sewing, household plumbing and household maintenance.

But that apparently has done little to calm Egyptians, who have taken to telling the following story: ziptomise the arrogance of the rich Kuwaitis.

An Egyptian taxi driver picks up a Kuwaiti passenger. The driver, out of compassion, tells the Kuwaiti there is no charge for the ride. The Kuwaiti looks at him and says, "I don't need charity from a beggar." — The Mercury News.

Gulf war of another kind grips the world

By Richard Loran
The Associated Press

TELEVISION viewers in Cuba watched cartoons and baseball as U.S. and allied aircraft attacked Baghdad in the early hours of the Gulf war.

But in the most of the rest of the world, that was when the news bombardment began.

Television networks from Spain to Santiago out into their regular programming to describe the aerial attack from the Al Rashid hotel in the Iraqi capital.

Newspapers from Australia to Zimbabwe rushed to put out special war editions and continue to print daily special sections on military developments.

Cable News Network, often broadcast locally with live voice-over translations, was the only source of spot news from Baghdad for much of the world that first night and is still heavily relied on for live coverage to bolster marathon news specials in dozens of countries.

The Atlanta-based network has so dominated European airwaves since Iraq's Aug. 2 invasion of Kuwait that Italy's state-owned

Rai network said Thursday it wants to create a 21-hour European news station to counter what it sees as CNN's American point of view.

CNN correspondent Peter Arnett, who remained in Baghdad when others were ordered to leave Jan. 19, is now a household name in countries where most people were unaware of CNN before the war.

But Arnett is not the only foreign correspondent left in the battered city.

Alfonso Rojo, a reporter for the Madrid daily El Mundo who was also allowed by Iraqi authorities to remain, said in a story published Friday he has had to resort to scribbling handwritten notes out of Iraq because Arnett will not let him use the CNN satellite connection.

In some countries, officials have begun to react against the live marathons that typified the output of most TV stations in the first days of the war.

Gianni Pasquarelli, Rai general director, issued a directive Thursday asking that the Italian network dedicate extra news editions and bulletins only to "truly relevant news" and keep them

brief.

"Non-stop information is by nature non-verified information, and a type of programming that throws everything, whatever arrives, into the cauldron," Rai radio director Corrado Guerzoni said, explaining the rationale of the directives.

The government-run South African Broadcasting Corp. returned to its regular programming on Monday after viewers began demanding an end to saturation war coverage.

The country's mainstream press, run by whites, has been running page one war coverage every day. But black-oriented newspapers, like the Sowetan have given the war less coverage and said that many black South Africans either side with Iraq or are strongly against U.S. involvement in the region.

Also Thursday, nine mainstream conservative, centrist and socialist deputies in the French parliament said they were creating a "parliamentary observatory" of the media's war coverage.

The deputies criticised "disorder" in war coverage that caused ethical problems such as

the lack of distance with events, unverified information and risk of leaking military information.

In Thailand, the nation published an editorial Thursday entitled "War as Entertainment."

"The number of prisoners of war, the number of combat aircraft shot down, the number of Scud missiles destroyed have quickly replaced the government lottery in the terms of waging daily bets. Even the weekly horse races have become mundane."

Spain's year-old private and regional television stations, eager to establish themselves after decades of state TV monopoly, sent crews to the Gulf during the buildup to the war. Madrid's local station anchors its news programme live from Jerusalem and Amman.

Reporter Eric Prattini of the Cadena Ser Radio network raced from Jerusalem to Tel Aviv when the first Iraqi Scud missiles fell and was one of the first to confirm live that the warheads were conventional.

There are more than 140 Japanese journalists and technicians in the region, more than 100 from France and 30 from China. The Gulf war has lengthened

television broadcast hours in some countries and expanded content limits in others.

French-speaking television in Belgium, which normally stops broadcasting at 11:40 p.m., now runs all night with hourly news updates.

Mexico's Televisa Satellite News Network has indefinitely extended its late-night newscast from 30 minutes to an hour.

The state-owned Singapore Broadcasting Corporation's Radio and television stations have also expanded their hours. Radio stations broadcasting in English, Mandarin, Malay and Tamil used to sign off at midnight. Now they offer round-the-clock updates.

Zimbabweans and foreigners gather daily in the Harare Sheraton Hotel lounge and the Hotel Inn's Southbox cocktail bar to watch live war reports.

In post-communist Poland, where the war competes for space with Baltic efforts for independence from the Soviet Union, the war has prompted the first appearances of military experts in newspapers and on television.

State television offers a 10-minute nightly talk show, called

"War for peace," in which two Polish air force colonels discuss developments and present the types of arms used by both sides.

State-run television in China used CNN extensively on the first day of the war. In an unprecedented move, the national evening news broke away from domestic issues Jan. 17 a few minutes after the start of the newscast to provide 10 minutes of war reports.

Cuba appears to be one of the few countries immune to the coverage. The night the war broke out, Cubans received scanty coverage of the war or government-controlled media.

The night of the attack, Cuban television showed excerpts of a news conference by President Fidel Castro in which he lamented the outbreak of war and said it could have been prevented by further negotiations. But he devoted most of his time to the upcoming Pan American games.

Cuba, one of two members of the U.N. Security Council which repeatedly held out against Iraq resolutions, has a resident contingent of more than 200 people in Iraq.

Sunday's Economic Pulse

Oil weapon used against Jordan

By Dr. Fahed Faneh

THE air raids that hit five Jordanian land tankers this week transporting crude oil from Iraq to Jordan left four drivers killed, others injured and deprived Jordan from its only source of oil. These were another manifestation of using the oil weapon for political ends.

For reasons well understood, the West was always against using oil as political weapon. The Arabs used this weapon only once in 1973 to deter the unjust support of America and the West to the Israeli aggression against Egypt, Syria and Jordan. Since then the Arab oil was never used as a political weapon, even when justification for such use was very obvious.

It is now America that is using oil weapon to extract political gains at the expense of Jordan's national will. This is a dangerous step in the longer run because it sets a precedent for the future.

To set the record straight, we should first point out the fact that Jordan already secured the written consent of the Special Sanctions Committee of the Security Council to import oil from Iraq as an exception from the sanctions imposed on trade with Iraq.

The flow of oil to Jordan was carried out by Jordanian tankers, driven by Jordanian citizens, on an international highway, therefore it was not a legitimate target for the military aircrafts of the American-Zionist coalition.

Jordan is definitely entitled to full compensation and apology, but under the circumstances, Jordan will not apply to the International Court of Justice. It will not ask for more than an explanation and an assurance that the ugly action will not be repeated.

Jordan depends 100 per cent on imported oil for all its energy needs. It consumes around 22 million barrels a year or 60,000 barrels per day. Jordan's strategic reserve of crude oil is minimal. It can hardly cover three weeks consumption in normal circumstances.

Jordan will of course have to look for alternative sources for oil. The only available source under the current circumstances is Syria. The Prime Minister already secured Syrian undertaking to come to Jordan's help in case of an Israeli aggression or oil supplies interruption. Most likely, Jordan will start buying the oil from Syria as of this week.

Jordan used to take the oil from Iraq either free or at a concessionary price. No cash payment was involved, as Jordan only gave credit to Iraq against its old debt. Now Jordan will be required to pay Syria in foreign exchange, based on the international oil price which is fortunately not very high at the moment, but the price of the Syrian crude oil will put the Jordanian economy under more pressure.

The purpose of the aggression against our fleet of land tankers was to punish the Jordanian people for expressing their real feelings. American politicians were apparently under the impression that Jordan will shift its position under the impact of the oil weapon. Nothing could be more wrong. The Jordanian people knew in advance that if they line up in the wrong side, they will be rewarded in billions of dollars. They are ready to accept sacrifices for being honest with their national feelings. Oil or no oil, Jordan will continue to be for peace and dialogue, and against war, destruction and foreign intervention.

America would be better off abiding by the international law, and refraining from aggression against Jordan's oil supplies, which were flowing by virtue of decisions taken by the United Nations.

Let us hope that the accident was a mistake by the military command, and that the wrong will be corrected without much delay.

This war is not about Kuwait, so Arabs can support Iraq without guilt

By Safwan Bataineh

TO ALL those Arabs who have suffered a wrenching moral dilemma ever since American troops massed in the Arabian desert, and American planes started mercilessly bombing Iraq, I say: do not feel guilty about siding with Iraq. The struggle taking place now is larger than Kuwait and even Iraq itself. It has become, in an irrational and roundabout, but nevertheless a clear manner, your own struggle.

Not that the occupation and annexation of Kuwait is right. It is not. But you must stop whispering your angry condemnations, set aside your hackneyed platitudes, and get off that shaky fence. For the predicament of your Kuwaiti brothers must not blind you from perceiving the greater risks and pains that shall befall the Arab nation should Iraq be destroyed or humiliated.

The rational arguments for condemning and keeping Iraq at bay have become all too familiar and faded. They have been whispered in melancholic and wistful tones by the conscientious, and cynically shouted by the treacherous, seeking to mask their treachery, dishonesty, and malignant hatred.

But sigh no more, Arabs, sigh no more, the ex-colonialists were deceivers ever.

The defeat of Iraq will be a defeat for all Arabs. It will be so in the eyes of the ever-hostile West; in the eyes of the world; and most importantly, in the eyes of your forsaken children. It will be the final triumph of the Western and Zionist old designs to divide, enslave, and forever subjugate the Arab World.

The consequences are plain to see and are openly planned for: the economic emasculation of the Arabs as oil prices drop to the floor and remaining wealth is bled away to finance the new colonialist regimes; the relegation of Arabs to a political wilderness in a new world order where Israel is invited to be a privileged member of a patrician club of nations and Arabs are shunned into a neglected leper colony of the ignominy and impotence; and the liquidation of the Palestinian cause as the new world order, which includes Russia and Eastern Europe, stops military and even financial aid to the Arabs and allows Israel to dictate its own terms for peace with dishonor.

So stop deceiving yourselves about what this war is all about, and scoff at assurances about the West bringing in a fair settlement to the region after the war; assurances that have not come from the West by the way (since no such intentions exist), but from those Arab lackeys who are busy paving the way for the destruction of Iraq.

The defeat of Iraq is not inevitable. It is only so if Arabs continue to either watch from a shameful distance or bankroll and support the ugly campaign to destroy Iraq's military and industrial capabilities. This fact places the responsibility for the heinous consequences of defeat squarely upon the sagging shoulders of the Arab Nation.

The road to a free Kuwait does not lie along the path of the Stealth bomber. Such a path will lead only to a more ignominious bondage new Arab order emerges: an order which rejects and forever banishes all forms of backwardness, dependence, and dictatorship.

The trumpet has sounded for the gathering of the Arab Nation. A call to stand by the Arab people of Iraq; to frustrate the designs of the Arab-Israeli struggle and to force the West into a just settlement of equality, reciprocity, and mutual respect. A call for Arabs to shape their own destiny.

The writer is a former economic adviser to the prime minister. He is now executive director of the Amman-based private services development project. He contributed this article to the Jordan Times.

14,000 Palestinians detained

Amnesty calls for U.N. intervention in Israeli-occupied Arab territories

FOR OVER three years now Amnesty International has been expressing its concerns about a pattern of serious and widespread human rights violations in the Israeli-occupied territories. These include large scale use of detention without trial, systematic ill-treatment and the killing of civilians by Israeli forces. Amnesty International deeply regrets that such violations continue, affecting thousands of people, and that the Israeli Government has been unwilling to take urgently needed measures of redress.

Some 14,000 Palestinians, including prisoners of conscience, have been held in administrative detention without charge or trial since December 1987. Over 4,000 were detained during 1990 for renewable periods of up to one year, the vast majority in the Ketzioz detention camp in Israel, where visits by families do not take place. Although a two-step process of judicial review of detention orders is available, detainees are effectively unable to exercise the right to challenge their detention, as crucial information about the reasons for the detention is almost invariably withheld. The Israeli authorities often refer to the need to protect sources of information to justify such practices.

Amnesty International has repeatedly called on the Israeli authorities to review the necessity and appropriateness of maintaining the practice of administrative detention. It believes that this practice should not be used to detain prisoners of conscience nor should it be used as a means to avoid the safeguards of a regular criminal justice system. It continues to call all detained prisoners of conscience to be released immediately and unconditionally, and for the other political detainees to be released unless they are given an adequate opportunity to exercise effectively the right to challenge their detention. Amnesty International does not accept in this context that details of the evidence against each detainee cannot be disclosed more often.

Thousands of Palestinians have been tried by military courts in the occupied territories, most charged with violent offences such as throwing stones or petrol bombs. After arrest, they can be held for 18 days before appearing before a judge. Many are denied access to lawyers and families for much longer periods. Confessions allegedly extracted during incommunicado detention are often the primary evidence. Those who plead not guilty face delays which could postpone trials for months and sometimes years. If convicted, they face heavier sentences than those who choose to plead guilty. Bail is rarely granted and many plead guilty in order to avoid periods of pre-trial detention which would exceed likely sentences.

The systematic use of ill-treatment during interrogation continues to be widespread. Palestinians have also been tortured to obtain confessions or other information. Methods include beatings with truncheons and rifle butts on various parts of the body; hooding with dirty sacks; sleep deprivation by pro-

longed shackling in uncomfortable positions; confinement in small darkened cells often referred to as "closets"; burning with cigarettes; squeezing of testicles; and sexual harassment.

At least some such methods may be consistent with secret guidelines issued in 1987 by a commission of inquiry into the methods of investigation of the General Security Service. The commission, chaired by Justice Moshe Landau, endorsed "the exertion of a moderate measure of physical pressure" during interrogation. Amnesty International believes that any official suggestion that such treatment is permissible clearly departs from international law and accepted standards for criminal law. The Universal Declaration of Human Rights and other international human rights instruments prohibit all forms of cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment under any circumstances.

Many Palestinians have been physically beaten immediately after being apprehended. At least 16 are reported to have died after such beatings since December 1987.

Palestinians are reported to have died after tear-gas had apparently been deliberately misused in confined spaces where it can be lethal. Since December 1987 some 80 Palestinians, many elderly or very young, are reported to have died after having been exposed to tear-gas, about half after canisters were thrown into their homes or other confined places.

Since December 1987, some 700 Palestinian civilians, including many children and young people, have been shot dead by Israeli forces using live ammunition and special types of plastic and other bullets. Some appear to have been deliberately killed, others to have been the victims of a use of lethal force in circumstances where this cannot be justified. Israeli forces continue to use firearms as a common means of riot control, under official guidelines which appear to be inconsistent with the internationally recognised principles of necessity and proportionality in the use of force.

In October 1990 at least 17 Palestinians were shot dead by police at the Haram Al-Sharif (Temple Mount) in Jerusalem in the context of a riot. An official commission of investigation, headed by a former head of external intelligence, found that the shootings were justified by a life-threatening situation, although it also established that at some point firing was indiscriminate and that an ambulance attending the wounded was hit, injuring two nurses. Reports from local human rights groups and other sources suggested that many of the victims died as a result of indiscriminate and unjustifiable use of firearms. A judicial inquiry into the killings is currently taking place. Amnesty International has called for an independent and impartial judicial inquiry to investigate the incident and to review official guidelines on opening fire and methods of riot control.

Official investigations into

abuses by Israeli forces are mostly conducted internally and take a long time to conclude. Despite the high incidence of apparently unjustifiable deaths since December 1987, Amnesty International is aware of only two prosecutions leading to imprisonment in cases of deaths following punitive beatings, and of five in cases of deaths by shootings. In 1990 one soldier was sentenced to two months' actual imprisonment and three received suspended sentences of up to five months for having beaten two Palestinians in their custody in February 1988. One of the victims died after the assault. Also in 1990 one soldier was sentenced to four months of "unpleasant" work at a military base for having shot dead in June 1988 a Palestinian who was apparently fleeing arrest. Just three weeks ago a senior commander was given a suspended sentence of six months' imprisonment and a reprimand for having shot dead a Palestinian youth in July 1989.

The existing guidelines on the use of force, combined with the pattern of related abuses and the inadequacy of official investigations, all leads Amnesty International to conclude that the Israeli authorities are effectively condoning, if not encouraging, the perpetration of these human rights violations.

Amnesty International is aware that Palestinian methods of protest in the occupied territories have included violence, and that a number of soldiers and civilians have died as a result. Among the victims are some 300 Palestinians apparently killed by other Palestinians, the vast majority on suspicion of collaborating with the Israeli authorities. Some were killed after having been interrogated and tortured. Amnesty International stresses once again that it condemns torture and killings of prisoners by anyone. At the same time, it calls on the Israeli Government fully to abide by international human rights standards in exercising its authority over the Occupied Territories.

In particular, the Israeli authorities should urgently review existing guidelines on the use of force, including firearms and methods of interrogation, to ensure that they strictly comply with the Code of Conduct for Law Enforcement Officials and the Basic Principles on the Use of Force and Firearms by Law Enforcement Officials. Amnesty International also believes that speedy, impartial and public investigations, as well as appropriate prosecutions, are needed if doubts about the Israeli Government's willingness to protect human rights are to be removed.

The Government of Israel is already a signatory to the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights and the Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment. Amnesty International urges the Government to make a binding commitment to uphold these standards by ratifying these instruments and by taking all other measures that are urgently required to redress the continuing situation of grave human rights violations in the Occupied Territories.

U.S. planes

(Continued from page 1)

Iraqi Radio that the allies had resorted to attacks on residential areas.

"The usurpers of the Arab land, the desecrators of its sanctities, and the looters of its wealth find no means to confront Iraq's courageous challenge and its valiant armed forces," the broadcast statement said.

"There have been 18 of these cowardly raids on these areas," it said.

Iraq's ruling Al Baath party newspaper said Saturday that the daily allied bombing of the country had failed to "break the will and capabilities of Iraq... the aggressors known now that the idea of a short war to strip Iraq of its power has failed."

Iraqi columns struck across the border from Kuwait into Saudi Arabia last Tuesday night and Wednesday, seized the abandoned town of Khafji and held it until Thursday.

Neither Iraq nor the United States and its allies have reported major engagements on the ground since Thursday night.

The Iranian news agency IRNA said Iraq's opponents launched new bomb and missile attacks on the Iraqi port city of Basra and other parts of southern Iraq Saturday, with two huge blasts rocking Basra.

A U.S. military spokesman also said air attacks have virtually eliminated the threat of missile attack by Iraqi patrol boats.

Reporting four engagements on Friday night and early Saturday in which U.S. aircraft hit Iraqi patrol boats, the spokesman said a total of 31 craft had now been put out of action.

"We have destroyed practically all patrol craft that were capable of delivering missiles," he said. "It may be they have only one or two left."

France said its planes attacked near Iraq's border with Kuwait.

The French defence ministry said two of the raids were, as in

previous days, against artillery and mechanised units of Iraq's elite Republican Guard. A third strike was against a munitions Depot 30 kilometres south of Kuwait City.

A British military spokesman said Iraqi troops in Kuwait continued to move around but there was no sign of them preparing a new assault.

In other developments: France gave permission Friday for U.S. B-52 bombers based in Britain to fly over French territory on bombing missions to the Gulf, the French Ministry announced.

The U.S. bombers flying over France can carry only conventional arms and may not strike civilian targets or religious sites in Iraq, the ministry said in a communiqué.

"When we speak of non-conventional arms, we're essentially meaning nuclear, chemical and radiological arms," a ministry spokesman said.

B-52 carry either conventional

bombs or cruise missiles. The missiles can be tipped with conventional or nuclear warheads. The ministry spokesman said conventionally armed missiles would probably be permitted under the accord.

The government has agreed to allow a Pakistani charity to send medicine and 2,000 pints (950 litres) of blood to help war victims in Iraq, the organisation's leader said Saturday.

"Muslims are dying and we want to help. The government says we can send this," said Abdul Sattar Edhi, head of the Karachi-based Edhi Welfare Trust.

Edhi said the medicine and blood would be sent to Iraq through the Saudi Red Crescent. He said the charity also had wanted to send milk and baby food to Baghdad but was denied permission.

Egyptian authorities have ordered a Gulf-bound ship to unload explosives from its cargo before entering the Suez Canal.

Shipping sources said owners of the 15,125-ton Oatari-registered Fathulhaair were told that 109 tonnes of high explosive mines could be sent overland and reloaded at the Red Sea end of the canal. Two Iraqi crew members were also told to travel by land.

A French television reporter said on Saturday U.S. soldiers had threatened French journalists with machine guns when they attempted to film in the Saudi town of Khafji after it was retaken by allied troops.

Nearly 400 refugees fleeing the Gulf war have crossed into Iran from Iraq in the past two days, IRNA reported.

It said 360 nationals of India, Sudan, Somalia and the Philippines were housed in temporary camps after arriving at Khosravi, a main crossing 720 km west of Tehran.

Eight Kuwaitis and 15 Iranians crossed through the Shalamcheh border in the south, IRNA added.

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JORDAN MARKET PLACE

Troisième semaine de guerre

Les premiers combats terrestres

L'offensive surprise lancée mardi soir par plusieurs milliers de soldats irakiens contre la ville saoudienne de Khafji a été «entièrement repoussée» jeudi selon l'état-major de la coalition anti-irakienne, mais des poches de résistance subsistent le long de la frontière koweït-saoudienne. Les Irakiens ont annoncé quant à eux vendredi soir qu'ils «se retirent» de la ville de Khafji.

Une certaine confusion régnait cependant, hier encore, autour du bilan de cette première bataille terrestre de la guerre du Golfe. Après un bilan publié par l'agence soviétique Interfax faisant état de 1.500 morts irakiens et un bilan britannique parlant de 300 soldats irakiens tués, les Britanniques révisaient vendredi soir ce chiffre à la baisse en n'annonçant

plus que 30 morts. Chiffre confirmé l'Arabie Saoudite qui ajoute que 400 soldats irakiens auraient été faits prisonniers. Il semble également qu'à la suite d'une bavure, l'US Air-force ait tiré sur une de ses propres divisions, causant la mort de 11 marines.

La semaine a également été marquée par l'atterrissage de près de cent appareils irakiens, civils et militaires, en Iran selon le Pentagone. Mais l'Iran, qui n'a reconnu l'atterrissage que de 16 appareils, a assuré qu'ils ne pourraient pas quitter son territoire avant la fin du conflit, tout en précisant que sa position sur ce point pourrait changer en cas d'offensive irakienne. L'Iran n'a par ailleurs jamais indiqué ce qu'il comptait faire des pilotes et des équipages de ces

avions irakiens.

Selon le ministre israélien de la Défense, Moshe Arens, tous les chasseurs bombardiers irakiens Sukhoi-24 seraient passés en Iran, ce qui représente 20 à 25 avions. Cela signifie selon lui que l'Irak «tente de mettre à l'abri tous ses appareils de qualité hors de son territoire». Les autres hypothèses avancées jusqu'à présent —défection, fuite devant les appareils de la coalition anti-irakienne, ou encore «provocation» pour entraîner l'Iran dans la guerre— semblent de moins en moins plausibles aux analystes militaires américains qui privilégient la thèse israélienne. Restent les interrogations sur l'attitude des Iraniens dans cette affaire. Téhéran a officiellement décidé de saisir ces avions jusqu'à la fin de la guerre et a assuré les Etats-Unis, par l'intermédiaire de la Suisse et de son ambassadeur à l'ONU, qu'il entendait rester neutre. Dans une interview accordée à CNN, Saddam Hussein a affirmé qu'il

est naturel que les avions irakiens se posent en Iran puisque les deux pays voient dans la guerre «une bataille entre la foi et l'infidèle». Interrogé sur une possible réutilisation de ces avions, il a affirmé que «chaque cas dépendait de circonstances particulières».

Téhéran est de ce fait, depuis jeudi, le théâtre d'une intense activité diplomatique. Pour la première fois depuis le début de l'offensive de la coalition contre l'Irak, une importante délégation irakienne conduite par le ministre délégué aux Affaires Etrangères, Saadoun Hammadi, est arrivée jeudi après-midi à Téhéran, avec un message du président Saddam Hussein «sur les relations bilatérales et la guerre du Golfe». Le secrétaire général du ministère français des Affaires Etrangères, François Scheer, le chef de la diplomatie algérienne Sid Ahmed Ghazali et une délégation du Yémen se sont également rendus à Téhéran. Après une accalmie de

trois jours, l'Irak a repris jeudi ses tirs de missiles SCUD en direction d'Israël. Mais comme cela avait été le cas lundi dernier, le missile irakien a ogive conventionnelle est retombé sur la Cisjordanie occupée sans faire de victime selon le porte-parole de l'armée israélienne.

Pour la première fois depuis la création de l'Etat d'Israël, l'Allemagne a organisé à partir de jeudi soir un pont aérien afin de fournir du matériel militaire à l'Etat hébreu, notamment des blindés ultra sophistiqués, des équipements de protection contre les gaz et une batterie de missiles anti-missiles américains Patriot.

Pour la première fois également depuis le déclenchement de la guerre, l'OLP a annoncé avoir tiré mardi à l'aube 80 roquettes sol-sol de type Grad en direction des localités de Metoulla, Miskav Am, Kafr Jalaadine et Nahariya, dans le nord d'Israël. Selon une source militaire israélienne ces roquettes se sont abattues sur la «zone

de sécurité» créée et occupée par l'Etat hébreu au Liban du sud, sans faire de victimes ni dégâts. Lundi soir, Zeid Wehbe, représentant au Liban du chef de l'OLP Yasser Arafat, avait menacé de bombarder Israël si la coalition poursuivait ses attaques sur les populations et les infrastructures civiles en Irak et si le couvre-feu était maintenu dans les territoires occupés de Cisjordanie et de Gaza.

Dès la chute des roquettes, Israël a annoncé qu'il n'entendait pas pratiquer un politique de retenue au Liban sud. «Le Liban sud n'est pas l'ouest de l'Irak», a déclaré le coordinateur des activités israéliennes dans cette région, qui a souligné qu'Israël «n'attendra pas pour réagir aux agressions en provenance du Liban».

Elle a réagi en effet le jour même en pilonnant dans la soirée le camp de réfugiés palestiniens de Rachidié au sud Liban faisant trois morts.

Agences

Dernière édition du «Jourdain»

En raison des circonstances particulières que traversent actuellement la Jordanie et la région, la Fondation de la Presse Jordanienne (Al-Rai' Jordan Times) n'est plus en mesure de poursuivre la publication de son supplément hebdomadaire en français, Le Jourdain, au sein du Jordan Times.

Cette édition est donc la dernière des pages en français, qui sont publiées depuis le mois d'octobre 1988.

Le Jourdain remercie tous ses fidèles lecteurs pour leur soutien et leurs encouragements tout au long de cette période, et espère pouvoir réparaître en de meilleures circonstances.

Tout courrier peut être adressé désormais à l'éditeur de ce supplément:

Jean-Marc Bordes
PO Box 35.287
AMMAN

EN BREF

Accusation. Le ministre jordanien des Affaires Etrangères, Taher al-Masri, a accusé l'aviation alliée d'attaquer des civils et d'avoir tué, mardi et mercredi, quatre Jordaniens à l'intérieur du territoire irakien alors qu'ils étaient en route pour leur pays. Le porte-parole du département d'Etat, Margaret Tutwiler, a indiqué de son côté que les Etats-Unis regrettaient profondément la mort de quelque civil que ce soit, tout en rappelant que la région dans laquelle se trouvaient ces véhicules était zone de guerre et qu'elle continuerait à être extrêmement dangereuse, compte tenu de la poursuite de la campagne contre les SCUD.

Essence. Le gouvernement jordanien a décidé de restreindre la circulation en Jordanie en organisant l'usage des voitures privées sur la base d'un jour sur deux afin d'économiser l'énergie. Les voitures privées munies de plaques d'immatriculation portant des numéros impairs rouleront les jours impairs, tandis que les voitures munies de plaques portant des numéros pairs rouleront les jours pairs. Les taxis et autres véhicules de service public ne sont pas concernés par ces mesures. Les restrictions seront appliquées à partir de mercredi prochain et les voitures qui ne s'y conformeront pas seront confisquées.

Refugiés. Les réfugiés fuyant les bombardements des forces de la coalition sur l'Irak affluent de plus en plus nombreux dans les camps installés à leur intention dans les pays frontaliers de l'Irak. En Jordanie, plusieurs milliers de ressortissants égyptiens et quelques soudanais qui étaient bloqués depuis une semaine au poste frontière irakien de Trebil ont commencé mercredi matin à entrer en Jordanie par le poste de Ruweishid. La Syrie, dont les frontières avec l'Irak sont fermées depuis 1982, a indiqué qu'elle était prête à les ouvrir pour des «raisons humanitaires» à toute personne fuyant l'Irak, y compris des Irakiens. Au total, plus de 2.500 étrangers se sont rendus en Iran par le poste de Khorasani.

Attentats. Environ 70 attaques terroristes ont été menées contre les membres de la coalition anti-irakienne depuis le début des hostilités le 17 janvier dans de nombreux pays. En Jordanie, la British Bank of Middle East et le Centre Culturel Français ont été attaqués cette semaine. Des agresseurs dont on ignore le nombre ont aspergé d'essence la bibliothèque du CCF et y ont placé une bonbonne de gaz avant d'y mettre le feu. L'attentat, revendiqué à l'AFP par l'Organisation des Brigades du Jihad, inconnue à ce jour, a mis hors d'état le premier étage du centre mais n'a fait aucune victime.

Victoire. Le président sud-africain Frederik de Klerk a soigné vendredi le glas de l'apartheid en abolissant deux des trois piliers juridiques de ce système raciste. Le premier (Group Acts) divisait les zones urbaines en fonction de la race, les villes proprement dites étant réservées aux blancs. Le second pilier se compose de deux lois (Land Acts) qui réservaient 87% du territoire à la minorité blanche. Ne reste que la loi sur la classification de la population, qui divise les Sud-Africains à la naissance en fonction de leur couleur de peau et conditionne leur existence (notamment sur le plan de l'éducation, encore organisée sur des bases raciales).

Somalie. La Somalie a changé de président mardi lorsque le Congrès de la Somalie Unifiée (USC), maître de Mogadiscio depuis dimanche dernier a désigné Ali Mahdi Mohamed pour succéder à la présidence de la République à Mohamed Siad Barré qui a pris la fuite pendant le week-end.

Séisme. Un violent tremblement de terre a secoué le Pakistan vendredi matin provoquant la mort d'au moins 175 personnes et en blessant plusieurs centaines. Ce séisme dont l'épicentre se situait au nord-ouest de Peshawar a atteint une magnitude de 6,8 sur l'échelle de Richter et a été ressenti jusqu'en Afghanistan, en Inde et en Asie centrale soviétique. Cette magnitude est généralement considérée comme importante et susceptible de causer de nombreux dégâts dans les zones peuplées, dans un large rayon autour de l'épicentre.

Accident. Un Boeing 737 de la compagnie intérieure US-Air qui s'apprêtait à se poser vendredi soir sur l'aéroport de Los-Angeles a heurté un avion taxi provoquant la mort de 15 personnes et faisant 25 blessés. 29 passagers des deux appareils étaient encore portés disparus hier en début d'après-midi.

Tennis. L'Allemand Boris Becker est devenu, à 23 ans, le nouveau numéro un mondial du tennis masculin cette semaine à Melbourne, en remportant la finale des Internationaux d'Australie face au Tchèque Ivan Lendl. Il succède ainsi au Suédois Stefan Edberg qui avait détrôné Lendl à la faveur de son succès à Wimbledon l'année dernière.

Chevènement. Le ministre français de la Défense, Jean-Pierre Chevènement a démissionné mardi de ses fonctions. Ses réticences à l'égard du conflit du Golfe étaient connues. «La logique de guerre risque de nous éloigner chaque jour des objectifs fixés par les Nations-Unies», a écrit M. Chevènement dans la lettre qu'il a adressée au chef de l'Etat et des Armées, François Mitterrand.

Partielles. Les trois néo-rénovateurs Michel Noir, Michèle Barzach et Jean-Michel Dubernard qui avaient déclenché des législatives partielles à Lyon et Paris pour «faire la politique autrement», n'ont pas su mobiliser les électeurs. Lors du premier tour du scrutin, dimanche dernier, les électeurs ont battu des records d'abstention —près de 70% d'abstention à Lyon— et Mme Barzach a été très largement distancée à Paris par le candidat soutenu par Jacques Chirac. En outre, le maire de Lyon et son adjoint auront à affronter dimanche prochain un candidat du Front National, les représentants de Jean-Marie Le Pen arrivant seconds devant ceux du PS et du RPR.

Tapie. La commission nationale de discipline du football français a suspendu pour un an, dont quatre mois avec sursis, Bernard Tapie, président de l'Olympique de Marseille (toujours en tête du championnat de France), et pour six mois Jean-Pierre Bernès, directeur général de l'OM, dans l'affaire qui les opposait à Claude Bezz, ancien président des Girondins de Bordeaux. Ce dernier a été condamné pour sa part à 50.000 F d'amende pour «manquement grave à la morale sportive et accusations infondées». Après l'annonce de cette nouvelle, lundi matin, Bernard Tapie a décidé de démissionner.

LA SEMAINE...

de Suleiman Sweiss

Bienfaits de la guerre

Les méfaits de la guerre sont connus de tous. La mort et la destruction n'en sont que deux échantillons parmi d'autres. Il y en a de bien pires: le déracinement d'un peuple de sa terre, par exemple, tel que commis par le sionisme envers le peuple palestinien depuis 1948. De tels drames peuvent être la source de guerres interminables.

Les bienfaits de la guerre? Je n'entends pas par là évoquer des perspectives de reconstruction ou de renouvellement d'un pays, ni le regain des activités économiques et des investissements après la guerre. Cela n'empêche pourtant pas certains d'envisager déjà des formules du type «plan Marshall» à l'issue de cette guerre qui ne fait que commencer. Non, les bienfaits auxquels je pense sont tout à fait différents: ils sont politiques et suscitent l'attention la plupart du temps.

Tout d'abord, la trahison apparue au grand jour de certains régimes arabes, tels que l'Arabie Saoudite, l'Egypte ou la Syrie, a abrégé des années de lutte politique au sein du monde arabe. Depuis longtemps déjà, des mouvements politiques prônaient la lutte contre ces régimes réactionnaires et excluèrent tout compromis avec eux, qu'ils considéraient comme des valets de l'impérialisme américain. Les années n'ont fait que confirmer —aux yeux des larges masses arabes— les thèses des militants révolutionnaires arabes des années 1960-70. L'expérience s'enrichit et la conscience s'approfondit dans le vécu. Ce que nous, peuples arabes, voyons à Hafr el-Baten (base des troupes de la coalition en Arabie) est scandaleux mais riche d'enseignements pour le présent comme pour l'avenir. Sans la participation des armées saoudienne, égyptienne et syrienne à cette guerre aux côtés des «Alliés», il aurait fallu plus de temps pour démontrer le danger représenté par ces «faux» arabes.

Le deuxième «bienfait» est que cette guerre a aussi dévoilé les faux-frères musulmans, tels que M. Ozal en Turquie. Les Arabes, tout au long de leur histoire, n'ont jamais fait le moindre mal aux Turcs. On ne peut pas en dire autant en sens inverse! Il y a un an encore, le gouvernement turc stoppait l'écoulement de l'Euphrate vers la Syrie et l'Irak pendant un mois pour remplir le grand barrage «Ataturk» de l'eau vitale pour l'économie turque. Pourtant, ce même gouvernement permet aujourd'hui aux Américains de bombarder l'Irak depuis une base installée en Turquie. Nous laissons au peuple turc le soin de vérifier si une telle politique et un tel comportement sont conformes à la fraternité islamique.

Enfin, l'Occident s'est fait le champion depuis quelques mois d'une duplicité jamais égalée, en particulier après le bombardement des Israéliens par les missiles irakiens. Tout à coup, Israël est devenu l'agneau innocent qu'il faut armer jusqu'aux dents, auquel on donne son argent, son affection et qu'on honore de visites des chancelleries en signe de solidarité. Un confrère faisait remarquer il y a quelques jours que les peuples arabes n'ont jamais rien vu de cette sympathie lors des bombardements de leurs maisons par l'armée israélienne en 1967 et les années suivantes. Mais ce n'est pas là la seule forme de duplicité de l'Occident. La liste en est déjà longue. En cette fin de siècle qui a connu le plus grand progrès matériel, il s'avère que l'Occident, qui a contribué principalement à ce progrès, ne respecte toujours pas ses propres principes en matière de droits humains.

Il est peut-être cynique de parler des bienfaits de la guerre deux semaines après son déclenchement, au moment où l'avenir de la région est encore en suspens.

Depuis quelque temps, une opinion s'est répandue assez largement: la guerre ne vise pas, sur le terrain, la libération du Koweït, mais la destruction de l'Irak. C'est une déviation manifeste par rapport au texte de la résolution de l'ONU. Parallèlement, il semble que les forces coalisées hésitent à déclencher leur offensive terrestre, par peur de trop lourdes pertes.

Dans ce cas, n'est-il pas temps de réunir le Conseil de Sécurité pour adopter une nouvelle résolution et de revenir sur le recours à la force, dont il a été fait usage sans résultat pendant deux semaines.

Une initiative dans ce sens pourrait permettre à la région et au monde d'éviter de nouveaux drames. Car si les «Alliés» persistent dans leur guerre, le processus de polarisation dont a parlé le roi Hussein la semaine passée ne peut que s'aiguiser, et il faudra des décennies pour combler le fossé ainsi creusé entre les peuples d'Orient et les peuples d'Occident.

Semaine de guerre

DIMANCHE

-Après le Koweït, l'Arabie Saoudite s'engage à verser également 13,5 milliards de dollars aux Etats-Unis pour couvrir les frais de guerre.
-La destruction de quatre Mig 23 irakiens porte, selon le général Shwarzkopf, à 26 le nombre d'appareils abattus en combat aérien lors des 22.000 sorties des alliés. 18 unités navales irakiennes auraient été détruites.

LUNDI

-Alors que Téhéran annonce l'arrivée de quatre autres avions irakiens en Iran, Londres fait état d'une centaine au total.
-Septième attaque de missiles sur Israël: un SCUD tombe en Cisjordanie occupée.
-Dans une interview à CNN, Saddam Hussein affirme que ses SCUD ont une «capacité nucléaire, biologique et chimique».

MARDI

-L'Irak annonce qu'un des aviateurs alliés prisonniers a été tué lundi dans les bombardements sur Bagdad. Washington affirme avoir détruit ce jour-là un convoi de blindés irakiens et de véhicules d'approvisionnement.
-Jérusalem riposte à des tirs de roquettes contre le nord d'Israël, revendiqués par l'OLP en signe de solidarité avec l'Irak, en pilonnant dans la soirée le camp de réfugiés palestiniens de Rachidiy au Liban sud faisant 3 morts.
-L'Irak déverse du pétrole d'un terminal pétrolier dans la péninsule de Fao (Irak), provoquant une nouvelle marée noire.

MERCREDI

-Déclaration commune américano-soviétique annonçant que les hostilités pourraient prendre fin si l'Irak s'engageait sans équivoque à se retirer du Koweït.
-Bagdad affirme que ses troupes ont mené dans la nuit une «importante offensive terrestre» sur Khafji (environ 5 km à l'intérieur du territoire saoudien sur la côte est).
-89 avions irakiens sont passés en Iran selon le chiffre officiel de la coalition anti-irakienne, 16 seulement selon Téhéran (dont 4 ont «disparu» ou se sont écrasés).
-Démission du commandant des forces navales italiennes dans le Golfe, qui avait estimé dans des déclarations à la presse qu'il «n'aurait peut-être pu éviter la guerre avec un

peu de sagesse».

JEUDI

-Téhéran dément des informations de presse selon lesquelles un des avions de transport irakiens ayant atterri en Iran aurait été autorisé à regagner l'Irak.
-Une source militaire américaine annonce que deux soldats américains —dont une femme— d'une unité de transport qui n'a pas été engagée dans les combats sont portés disparus dans le nord-est de l'Arabie Saoudite. Les Irakiens disent les avoir capturés.
-L'attaque irakienne sur Khafji a été repoussée selon le commandement central américain à Riyad.
-Un avion américain de type C-130 avec une vingtaine de militaires à bord a disparu derrière les lignes irakiennes. Une opération est lancée pour localiser et récupérer l'équipage de cet avion.

VENDREDI

-Nouveaux tirs de roquettes pour le cinquième jour consécutif contre le nord d'Israël depuis la «zone de sécurité» israélienne au Liban sud revendiqués par la résistance palestinienne.
-Bavure de l'aviation américaine en Arabie Saoudite: 11 marines sont tués dans le bombardement d'une de leurs divisions par l'US-Airforce, selon le département d'Etat américain.
-La France autorise le survol de son territoire par les bombardiers américains B-52 que la Grande-Bretagne a autorisé la veille à partir de ses bases pour aller bombardier l'Irak. Paris précise que ce feu vert exclut des appareils équipés d'armement non conventionnel.

SAMEDI

-Les Américains affirment que l'offensive irakienne contre l'Arabie Saoudite n'aura aucun effet sur le déroulement des opérations militaires de la coalition et ne précipitera pas l'engagement du conflit terrestre.
-La Grande-Bretagne ramène le bilan des combats de Khafji à 30 soldats irakiens tués, contre les 300 qu'elle avait annoncés la veille. Ce deuxième bilan est confirmé par l'Arabie Saoudite qui fait état par ailleurs de 400 prisonniers irakiens.

S.K.

Lettre au président français

Signée par soixante-dix anciens élèves jordanais des écoles universitaires françaises, la lettre que nous publions ci-dessous a été adressée la semaine passée au président de la République française, François Mitterrand, par l'intermédiaire de l'Ambassade de France à Amman.

Monsieur le Président,

Nous, signataires de cet appel, diplômés des universités et écoles françaises, exprimons notre étonnement de la participation de la France à l'agression que les Etats-Unis mènent contre l'Irak et son peuple.

Nous aurions espéré que la France, pays qui se considère ami du monde arabe, soit en dehors de cette guerre contraire à ses principes traditionnels de Liberté, d'Egalité, de Fraternité et de Justice.

Nous pensons que cette agression vise à détruire ce pays arabe sous prétexte d'appliquer les résolutions du Conseil de Sécurité de l'ONU.

Nous demandons au gouvernement français de procéder à un arrêt immédiat de la guerre et au rétablissement du dialogue constructif en vue d'instaurer une paix juste et durable au Proche-Orient en tenant compte de toutes les résolutions de l'Organisation des Nations-Unies concernant l'ensemble des problèmes de la région, notamment la question palestinienne.

Nous rappelons que toute solution négociée doit prendre en considération l'élimination de toutes les armes chimiques et nucléaires dans tous les pays de la région et en premier lieu Israël dont l'arsenal nucléaire suscite la plus vive inquiétude et représente le plus grand péril.

Nous croyons profondément que l'engagement militaire français dans cette guerre destructrice portera un coup dur à l'amitié arabo-française. C'est pourquoi nous nous attendons à ce que la France reprenne ses initiatives diplomatiques dans l'espoir de parvenir à un règlement pacifique de la crise.

Nous nous joignons aux forces de la Paix en France et en Europe et nous souhaitons que notre voix soit entendue.

Amman, le 27 janvier 1991



Jean-Pierre Chevènement a rendu son tablier de ministre français de la Défense.

Braderie planétaire

La dignité pour quelques dollars

Décidément, la crise du Golfe, devenue guerre du Golfe, nous fait découvrir, au fil des jours, des réalités insoupçonnées.

Ainsi, tout s'enchaîne: pour être diplomate, il faut être poli; or —partant du fait que la politesse est une forme d'hypocrisie—, les politiciens de ce monde qu'ils mènent à la catastrophe font de l'hypocrisie leur règle de conduite. Ils ont réussi à concilier, entre autres, —par un entrelacs inextricable de communications, d'interviews et autres conférences de presse, en utilisant des termes univoques— des théorèmes démontrables avec des postulats incontournables.

En prêchant la dissociation du problème du Moyen-Orient de celui du Koweït supposé être la cause directe du conflit, on nous a fait entrer de plain-pied dans cette tourmente apocalyptique, et malgré ce lien irrécusable, les Américains, par des manœuvres dilatoires, nous ont donné une leçon magistrale de l'art des tergiversations politiques. Pendant une semaine, ils se sont ingéniés à repousser, jour après jour, une résolution affectant à leurs yeux les intérêts d'Israël, alors que, dans la même période, ils réussissaient le tour de force de faire voter une dizaine de mesures à l'encontre de l'Irak! Et c'est à la fin de cette fameuse semaine que j'ai presque ressenti la honte d'être arabe. Car c'était l'unique opportunité pour les Arabes de prendre des dispositions unilatérales, des décisions fermes et irréversibles, de faire éclater cette coalition contre nature envers un autre pays arabe, de décider qu'un problème arabe il fallait une solution arabe, et qu'au-delà de toute considération ethnique ou ethnique, on ne peut concéder le droit de parler de guerre qu'à un seul pays arabe: le Koweït.

Mais hélas, mille fois hélas, où est la Nation arabe? Où est l'unité arabe? «Comment en un vil plomb, l'or pur s'est-il changé?» (Racine).

Pour une poignée de dollars, les Etats-Unis d'Amérique ont acheté la dignité, la conscience et la valeur morale d'un peuple au passé trois fois millénaire, vendues à une Amérique qui faisait il y a à peine cent ans, le 29 décembre 1890, exterminer par ses téniques bleues 300 Indiens en l'espace de quelques minutes. Le président Bush «pardonne sa dette à l'Egypte», comme s'il s'agissait d'un blasphème.

Pour une poignée de dollars, assortie d'une promesse évasive de relations commerciales bilatérales et l'assurance d'une amnésie chronique sur certains agissements terroristes, l'oncle Sam s'achète des lieux indéfectibles avec la Syrie.

Le comique côtoie le tragique. La Turquie multiplie les courbettes pour acheter une treizième place dans l'Europe des Douze. Elle va même jusqu'à offrir gracieusement une base aérienne militaire aux forces alliées pour qu'elles puissent bombardier l'Irak, oubliant qu'elle recevait de cet Irak-même des millions de dollars pour les pipe-lines qui traversent son territoire. Tout le monde est atteint de perte de mémoire aggravée: Hiroshima, Nagasaki, Berlin, c'est le passé lointain.

Emboitant le pas à ces «achats» et «ventes» tous azimuts, c'est alors une folle farandole, une envolée irrépressible de dollars à travers le monde.

L'Arabie Saoudite cautionne la politique de l'URSS avec 400 millions de dollars, alors même que les relations diplomatiques entre ces deux pays sont inexistantes, tandis que le Koweït se promet de verser des sommes inimaginables à la Chine pour acheter son veto à l'ONU. De la folie! L'Irak n'en demandait pas tant!

Une braderie à l'échelle planétaire. On liquide, on soldé, comme on sème à tous vents et à bas prix, l'Honneur, la Dignité, la Morale, la Vertu, la Conscience, le Passé, le Présent et même l'Avenir.

«La manie du rabaissement est la lèpre morale de notre époque», écrivait Flaubert.

Les Arabes ont été depuis longtemps et sont toujours en tête des peuples rabaisés et il faudrait être d'une naïveté extrême pour croire à cet amour subit et incontrôlable que les Etats-Unis et leurs alliés semblent soudainement éprouver à leur égard. An fil des jours, on s'aperçoit avec amertume que le Koweït est oublié et que seule la destruction de l'Irak compte. Même la France, dont l'ex-ministre de la Défense, Jean-Pierre Chevènement, est président de l'Association d'amitié franco-irakienne et qui avait promis de ne jamais intervenir en Irak, a failli à sa parole. Terre d'art et de culture, de liberté et de démocratie, elle vient de faire exploser, au rythme de ses bombes, cette devise qui fait d'elle la France: «Liberté, Egalité, Fraternité».

Depuis le début de la crise, les ballets diplomatiques orchestrés par les Etats-Unis n'avaient qu'un objectif précis: complexifier le problème pour ne laisser entrevoir qu'une seule issue possible: l'intervention armée.

On s'étonnait, en effet, d'entendre le président américain à son secrétaire d'Etat répéter à l'envi et comme un leitmotiv: «pas de compromis, pas de concessions, pas question pour l'Irak de sauver la face». Ils auraient dû ajouter pour compléter le chapelet de négativités: «pas de discussion». Ainsi, tout le monde aurait compris. Mais personne ne voulait comprendre ce qui pourtant était aussi clair que de l'eau de roche: les Américains, les Anglais, et bien sûr les Israéliens, voulaient purement et simplement détruire complètement le potentiel militaire irakien et, dans la foulée, écraser cet Etat arabe qui se permettait des velléités de modernisation.

Seul Saddam Hussein savait cela, tout comme il savait que la position du président Bush était dictée par deux principes fondamentaux et inébranlables. Premièrement: assurer à Israël, outre sa sécurité, une domination totale —militairement parlant— sur le monde arabe, ainsi qu'un rôle de partenaire et de gendarme dans la région. Deuxièmement: s'assurer la mainmise sur les ressources pétrolières du Golfe. Sur ce point précis, M. Bush —milliardaire grâce à ses puits de pétrole au Texas— est bien placé pour savoir que c'est grâce au pétrole qu'il s'est retrouvé propulsé au sommet de la statue de la Liberté, ce qui lui permet de regarder le monde de haut.

Les deux chocs pétroliers et leurs conséquences économiques catastrophiques ne sont pas près d'être oubliés. Comme ne peut être occultée la grande puissance économique de l'Europe des Douze, particulièrement après l'unification des deux Allemagne. Ajoutez à cette force naissante, celle inquiétante du Japon, et il n'est pas besoin d'avoir fait Sciences-Po pour comprendre que celui qui contrôlera le pétrole du Golfe contrôlera également le reste du monde. M. Bush le sait. Il est en Arabie Saoudite et n'en repartira jamais. Il y est; il y reste. Il ne pouvait pas laisser ce levier —qui pouvait faire basculer le globe— entre les

maines d'un Arabe.

Partant de ces raisonnements, un seul but est recherché: la victoire. Et l'on franchit allègrement la dernière marche de l'escalier qui mène à l'enfer. On bombarde l'Irak, presque joyeusement, à qui mieux mieux, dans une atmosphère d'Arbres de Noël. C'est une affaire d'heures. On se rappelle avec vantardise d'une autre guerre, dans la même région, qui n'avait duré que six jours. On fera mieux cette fois-ci: ce sera six heures, pas plus, ça a été planifié sur ordinateur géant.

Après trois jours de bombardements intensifs, désespérant de ne plus trouver d'objets militaires, on largue ses bombes n'importe où, sur des usines de lait pour enfants. Du lait biologique nu du lait chimique, qu'en sais-je? On lâche ses bombes sur des mosquées dont les minarets deviennent des lance-missiles —tout est possible en enfer. On jette ses bombes là où l'on veut, histoire de ne pas rentrer bredouille de la chasse, et de ne pas subir les quolibets des copains au retour.

Et soudain, ô rage, ô désespoir, Saddam Hussein a des prisonniers américains et autres! Est-ce possible? On se réveille, on crie au crime, on invoque la convention de Genève, on parle de Lois internationales, on se rappelle brusquement des Droits de l'Homme. «L'Homme est un apprenti, la douleur est son maître, et nul ne se connaît tant qu'il n'a pas souffert», disait Musset.

Pendant vingt-trois ans, dans les territoires occupés par Israël, les Droits, les Lois, les Conventions, les Résolutions, etc... ont été bafoués, foulés aux pieds, ignorés par l'entité sioniste. Je recommanderais à M. Bush de se faire projeter quelques cassettes vidéo avant d'aller se coucher: celles particulièrement horribles de soldats juifs brisant les bras et les omoplates de jeunes Palestiniens avec de grosses pierres, ou celles de bébés de moins de 1 an, le crâne fracassé par les balles, gisant lamentablement entre les bras de leur mère désespérée et sans défense. Après ces projections, je souhaite à M. Bush de passer, dans sa Maison Blanche, une nuit... de la même couleur.

Où est Genève, avec ses salles de conférences tapissées de rouge? Pendant 23 ans, Israël, soutenu par les Etats-Unis, a ignoré totalement l'idée même de Nations-Unies et ce qu'elles représentent. Il n'est pas concerné.

M. Bush, si l'on me passe l'expression, ne manque pas de souffle. Evoquer Genève, à ce stade, est vraiment faire preuve d'une totale absence du sens des réalités.

Un bombardier qui largue 10 tonnes de bombes à 10.000 mètres d'altitude ne détruit certainement pas que des objectifs militaires. Alors, de grâce! A la guerre comme à la guerre et tous les coups sont permis.

Au Vietnam, en Corée et ailleurs, les Américains —ces parangons de vertu— grillaient au lance-flamme des Vietnamiens sortant de leur refuge sous-terrain les bras hant levés en signe international de reddition. Sans parler du napalm, utilisé indistinctement pour brûler des familles entières, en Algérie, au Vietnam, et j'en passe! Et pour rester dans l'horreur, qu'on me permette de poser une devinette à tout être humains qui vit sur cette planète:

Vous êtes seul dans votre champ, à l'anbe d'un jour printanier. Votre femme, vos cinq enfants, vos parents et beaux-parents devraient vous rejoindre un peu plus tard pour vous apporter du café chaud et des galettes odorantes. Au loin, dans un ciel bien bleu, un avion bombardier lâche sa cargaison de 10.000 kilogrammes d'explosifs sur le village, enterrant, en l'espace de dix secondes, tout ce qui a fait votre vie. Vous étiez seul aux champs; vous êtes seul à jamais. L'avion a eu des problèmes techniques. Le pilote a sauté en parachute. Capturé par les villageois, on vous le ramène quelques temps plus tard, bien portant, le sourire encore aux lèvres du sentiment de sa mission accomplie, sur les lieux mêmes de son crime, sur les décombres de ce qui a été votre joie, votre bonheur, votre raison d'être. Que faites vous de ce pilote?

Il n'est pas besoin de sondage de l'opinion publique, ni de composer CANNIBAL sur son Minitel, pour connaître les réponses. Elles varieraient sous toutes les latitudes du Globe entre «Je le mange cru», «je le découpe en rondelles» et «je le fais griller à petit feu».

Mais vous n'y êtes pas! Selon MM. Bush, Major et autres, il faudrait le livrer à la Croix-Rouge et se conformer strictement aux termes de la Convention de Genève, votée en l'an de Grâce 1900-et-des-poussières. On croit rêver. Les pays du Maghreb viennent de demander la réunion du Conseil de Sécurité pour définir un processus de cessez-le-feu. Réponse: il est trop tard... ou trop tôt. Plus sibyllin que moi, tu meurs.

En conclusion, c'est avec amertume et déception que je note —entre autres malheureusement— les réactions de quelques personnalités dominantes:

M. Naguib Mahfouz, écrivain de renom, prix Nobel de littérature, Egyptien et Arabe de surcroît, dont l'âge, la culture et l'intelligence font, en principe, un pilier de la Sagesse mondiale, lance, dans des pamphlets qui froient l'indécence, un réquisitoire contre M. Saddam, fierté incontestable de tout Arabe digne de ce nom.

M. Bush, qui ajoute à la violence de ses diatribes, une scatologie indigne d'un président de la République la plus puissante du monde, proclamant à la face du monde qu'il va «botter le derrière de Saddam» (et je suis poli car le mot «ass» en anglais est beaucoup plus péjoratif), ne fait que prouver son manque de self-control et son inaptitude à résoudre les problèmes pacifiquement.

Manifestement à la solde des Etats-Unis, M. Perez de Cuellar, censé être le flic de la balance, symbole de Justice, s'est complètement effacé de la scène politique pendant la crise, pour ne réapparaître que lorsqu'il était trop tard. Devant l'échec de sa mission, une seule sortie possible et digne: démissionner de son poste, à l'instar de certains ministres français, soviétiques, turcs, et autres généraux.

M. Gorbatchev, prix Nobel de la Paix... sans commentaire. (Les Etats-Unis doivent regretter actuellement cette attribution).

Il est triste de constater que la Sagesse, «cette parfaite connaissance de toutes les choses que l'Homme peut savoir», n'est hélas qu'une coquille de noix, en détresse sur l'Océan des âges.

Rachid Boutella
Pilote de ligne algérien
Ancien pilote de chasse
dans l'armée irakienne

Voyage

A la découverte... de soi

L'été passé, j'étais en Afrique. Ce ne fut pas un voyage ordinaire. Tout mon être en fut frappé, choqué, bouleversé. Mes conceptions, mes idées et les éléments les plus profonds de mon inconscient furent secoués par un séisme. Jusque là je vivais (je sais maintenant que je devrais dire «vivotais») en tranquillité, en sécurité psychologique. Je me vantrais et me complaisais dans une stabilité qu'aucun doute ne venait jamais perturber. Tout cela est fini aujourd'hui. Tout cela appartient au passé.

En apparence, la capitale ressemble à toutes les villes occidentales. On y trouve des bâtiments modernes et même des gratte-ciels qui touchent les nuages, des rues droites et spacieuses encombrées de voitures, et les établissements habituels: banques, magasins, bureaux de poste et stations de chemin de fer. Mais je dis bien «en apparence». Promène-toi dans les rues et observes les indigènes en oubliant les Européens qui vivent aussi là-bas. Sous leur vêtement moderne on sent encore les hommes vrais, qui s'agitent et s'efforcent de briser leurs entraves. Regarde la couleur noire de leur peau; c'est la couleur des ténèbres, ténèbres de l'inconscient et de l'avant-civilisation. Ecoute-les parler et rire, regarde-les bouger de tout leur corps. Corps gracieux et non étolés, corps vivant où la nature palpite encore. Quand ils rient, leur rire vient des profondeurs. Il ne prend pas la forme que nous lui connaissons d'un rictus crispé se dessinant sur leurs visages. Regarde comme ils marchent: ils dansent, et cela dit beaucoup. Leurs

mouvements gracieux sont pleins de charme. Quand ils se parlent, ils se regardent sans gêne, ils sont à l'aise. Ils se regardent avec amour, pas un amour chrétien mais un amour primitif, une simple joie de vivre. Ils se moquent du péché chrétien et de toutes les niaiseries.

La nuit! Oh la nuit! Ce n'est pas notre nuit domptée et familière: là-bas, c'est une nuit effrayante, peuplée d'ombres et de voix. Le soir, lorsque la ville commence à s'endormir, la Nature et les arbres prennent une allure différente et sinistre. La végétation tropicale et opulente s'anime et murmure des chuchotements étranges. C'est comme si la Nature prenait une autre dimension pendant la nuit, une réalité qui n'existe pas le jour. La nuit est son domaine et n'appartient pas aux humains. Cette métamorphose s'accompagne de voix d'animaux qui deviennent plus audibles au fur et à mesure que la nuit se prolonge, créant une atmosphère ensorcelante. Tard dans la nuit, quand les tavernes locales ferment et déversent leur flot de client dans les rues, on entend les hommes saouls gémir et mêler leurs cris à ceux des animaux dans un concert d'épouvante. Les hommes oublient l'apparence civilisée du jour, pour retrouver leur nature indomptable. Dans mon lit, je me laisse emporter par ce tourbillon qui met mes sens sans dessus-dessous. Deux semaines dans cet état sont plus qu'assez pour te déranger, te briser la tête. Je me suis décidé à changer de place et à aller visiter... la mer.

O mer! O désert! je t'ai

toujours aimée. Je t'ai toujours chérie. Toujours tu m'as apporté le soulagement et la consolation. Cette fois aussi je me suis rapproché de toi espérant être soulagé et réconforté. En vain.

L'effet des deux semaines précédentes avait commencé à m'envahir et à me pénétrer sournoisement. Cette fois la mer ne m'a pas donné la guérison espérée, elle m'a infecté, n'a fait qu'ajouter à mes tracasseries.

Les plages d'ici sont faites autrement. Elles ne sont pas là pour qu'on s'y baigne ou pour y faire du sport avec des copains. Pas du tout. Les plages d'ici agitent et tourmentent l'esprit. On n'y trouve personne, la plupart du temps. On s'y sent seul. Et cette solitude, cette séparation du monde connu pendant des heures, ne m'aidait pas à retrouver un point de repère connu. Au contraire, je me suis senti perdu et je me suis enfoncé plus profondément dans la confusion et la terreur. J'essayais d'écouter les vagues qui me calmaient autrefois, mais elles ne faisaient que susciter mille questions aujourd'hui. Des questions sur ma vie jusqu'ici, des questions sur moi-même. Qui étais-je? Que faisais-je là? Que faisais-je dans ce monde? Questions sans contexte social, questions d'un monde sans société. J'étais seul au monde et, enfin, j'ai vu mon visage originel. J'étais dans un monde dénué, dénué de toute végétation ou consolation. Un monde cru et cruel, sans merci. J'étais dans un monde primordial, dans le monde tel qu'il est. Et j'ai vu des choses. J'ai compris la vanité et l'infinité des actes

humains et la futilité de leur vie. C'était comme si je voyais pour la première fois de ma vie, comme si mes yeux s'étaient ouverts pour la première fois. Comme si je naissais enfin, à ce moment précis.

Quelques jours après mon arrivée, je rencontrai un pêcheur par hasard. Je ne sais d'où il venait mais lui aussi conspirait, avec les autres, contre moi. Contre moi qui étais seul et vulnérable. J'ai passé de longues soirées à discuter avec lui après son retour de la pêche. C'était en fait un monologue: il parlait et j'écoutais; il posait des questions et n'attendait pas mes réponses. C'était son habitude que de lancer des questions à brûle-pourpoint. Un soir il m'a dit: «Il faut que les éléments aient confiance en toi pour te révéler un de leur secret». Une autre fois il m'a dit: «Regarde les gens! Ils sont si fous! Ils sont à ce point charmés par le soleil, qu'ils oublient l'obscurité et qu'ils ne s'en souviennent que trop tard!» ou encore «Il faut toujours diminuer! Les autres croissent, mais moi je diminue». Et d'autres paraboles énigmatiques qui m'ont transpercé comme l'éclair.

Finalement, je suis parti, plus agité qu'avant à l'idée de retrouver la capitale. Quelques jours plus tard, j'ai pris l'avion et j'ai achevé mon voyage. Mais ce voyage ne m'a pas quitté, c'est lui désormais qui voyage en moi. A cause de lui, j'ai perdu la tranquillité et la paix. Tant mieux, car je ne cherche plus cette tranquillité aveugle et soporifique. Je m'en vais, au gré du vent.

Maher Darwazah

Sans blague!

A la recherche de boucs émissaires

Maintenant que la guerre avait éclaté, il fallait bien trouver les boucs émissaires sur lesquels on pourrait définitivement rejeter la responsabilité de tous les dégâts, horreurs et souffrances qui allaient en résulter.

Pour les médias de la coalition, il n'y avait pas l'ombre d'un doute: Saddam et sa «clique» étaient les vrais coupables. Ils avaient attaqué un pays souverain, comptant près de 400.000 nationaux (plus 1 million et demi de serfs), sans aucune considération du fait que ce pays était membre à part entière de l'ONU (en instance de décès) ainsi que de la très regrettée Ligue Arabe.

Voici un extrait d'une conversation qu'eut dernièrement Shiry, envoyée spéciale d'une chaîne de télévision renommée, avec un intellectuel jordanien du nom de Sharif.

—Eh bien Sharif, pourquoi l'Irak a-t-il envahi un pays souverain?

—Vous devez savoir tout de même Shiry que le Koweït (strictement sur l'instigation de Washington) a poussé à bout la patience de l'Irak.

—Oui, je sais bien, mais tous les différends frontaliers ne peuvent justifier l'agression du 2 août. Il y a tout de même des instances internationales pour ce genre de conflits!

—Ecoutez, Shiry. Je suppose que vous n'allez pas porter plainte au commissariat de police chaque fois que votre petit frère vous casse les pieds: vous vous contentez de lui administrer une bonne fessée, c'est tout. C'est exactement ce qu'avait cru faire l'Irak. Il ne pouvait tout de même pas traiter le Koweït en pays étranger: ce dernier lui a toujours appartenu et ne lui a été volé qu'assez récemment!

—Et alors! Une bonne partie de la Pologne appartenait bien au troisième Reich, mais l'Allemagne réunie ne traite pas pour autant cette partie en «petit frère», comme vous dites!

—C'est très différent. Vous vous rappelez sans doute qu'en 1899 les Britanniques, moyennant de l'argent, des cadeaux et certains services, avaient réussi à convaincre le Cheikh du Koweït de signer un traité par lequel celui-ci leur donnait la main-mise sur les affaires extérieures du sous-département qu'il contrôlait. (Ce cheikh, disent les mauvaises langues, raffolait de jeunes matelots tout blonds.) Naturellement, ce traité n'avait aucune valeur légale car le Koweït (ainsi d'ailleurs que l'Irak) faisaient partie de l'Empire Ottoman. Imaginez un peu le sous-prefet de Lesparre (sous-préfecture de la Gironde), par exemple, signer un traité avec l'Irak donnant à Saddam la main-mise sur les affaires extérieures de ce sous-département!

Néanmoins, les Britanniques voulaient faire comprendre aux Boches qu'ils ne devaient pas étendre leur ligne de chemin de fer Berlin-Bagdad jusqu'au Golfe. En 1914, le Koweït fut déclaré protectorat britannique, les Ottomans s'étant rangés du côté de l'Allemagne dans la première guerre mondiale. La découverte ultérieure de pétrole dans ce pays a empêché, jusqu'en 2 août dernier, sa restitution à l'Irak.

Avouez tout de même qu'il est absolument ridicule et injuste qu'un pays comme l'Irak, de près de 400.000 km² ne puisse accéder aux mers que par l'intermédiaire d'un bras fluvial (le Chatt-el-Arab) dont, de plus, la rive gauche est occupée par un pays pas toujours amical, parce qu'il y a cent ans un officier de sa Majesté la reine Victoria (au peut-être un simple sous-officier) a pu corrompre un Cheikh de tribu ignorant et vicieux pour empêcher les Boches de menacer les routes maritimes des Indes! Pour en revenir à votre question, le troisième Reich a failli faire exploser le Golbe tout entier: était-il donc injuste que l'Allemagne paye?

—Présenté sous cette forme, votre point de vue se défend. Mais tout de même, on n'envahit pas un autre pays comme ça! Euh... du moins, on n'agit pas de la sorte si... on ne possède pas un siège permanent aux Nations Unies, voilà!

—Vous avez raison. Mais les dirigeants de Bagdad ont essayé de connaître l'opinion de la seule super-puissance

restante, sur le conflit qui les opposait au Koweït. L'ambassadeur américain (meublaine April Glaspie) leur fit comprendre que son pays n'interviendrait pas au cas où le conflit dégénérerait. Mais le Koweït était là qu'un prégo!

—Admettons. D'après vous, pourquoi les Etats-Unis auraient-ils agi de la sorte?

—Simplement parce qu'ils étaient convaincus que pour demeurer la seule super-puissance, ils devaient contrôler à tout prix les sources d'énergie du monde (dont une bonne partie se trouve malheureusement dans la région du Golfe). Rappelez-vous la fameuse déclaration Carter du début des années 1980, les «forces de déploiement et d'intervention rapide» et l'alliance stratégique avec Israël. Ils pensaient pouvoir continuer à effrayer tous les Arabes et à les intimider. Mais ils se rendirent bientôt compte que ni leurs forces d'intervention rapide ni Israël ne pouvaient se mesurer à l'Irak. Ils décidèrent donc d'écraser militairement ce pays et de maintenir à jamais leur propre présence dans le coin, aux frais de la princesse, bien sûr.

—Quel rôle tiendrait Israël dans ce scénario?

—Les Américains avaient déjà découvert qu'ils ne pouvaient plus continuer à effrayer l'Irak avec une grenouille, même surgonflée au point de paraître de la taille d'un boeuf. Si l'Irak était détruit, à Dieu ne plaise, Israël, une fois remis de la terreur occasionnée par ces sacrés vieux SCUDs et par ces non moins dangereux Patriots, pourra recommencer à jouer au boeuf vis à vis des jeunes Palestiniens armés de pierres, et de la plupart des régimes arabes.

—N'empêche, si l'Irak avait accepté de se retirer du Koweït, la guerre n'aurait pas eu lieu.

—Croyez vous vraiment, comme on ne cesse de nous le dire, que Bush, Major et Mitterrand n'arrivaient plus à dormir depuis que Saddam avait interdit à ce pauvre Cheikh Jaber de faire la nouba chaque jeudi dans son palais de Koweït-city? Malgré tous les milliards du Cheikh, il n'est difficile d'admettre que Bush et ses accolites se soient engagés, excusez le terme, comme maquereaux chez lui. Pour moi, Bush se fout absolument du Koweït, de son Cheikh et de toute sa famille. Ce qu'il voulait c'était une complète reddition de l'Irak: les dirigeants irakiens devaient accepter l'hégémonie absolue des Etats-Unis sur la région ainsi que la présence d'Israël en tant que seule puissance au Moyen-Orient. Bush et ses accolites ne préparaient-ils pas déjà l'opinion à «casser» l'Irak, bien avant que n'éclate l'affaire du Koweït, en inventant par exemple l'histoire du soi-disant canon irakien géant qui commençait en Angleterre et qui ne finissait qu'en Turquie?

—Mais comment expliquer le ralliement de l'Europe et du Japon à l'Amérique?

—De Gaulle n'est plus. Ceux qui lui ont succédé en France ne voient pas au-delà de leur bout du nez (à part Chevènement qui a dû démissionner). Quant à la Grande-Bretagne, à l'Allemagne et au Japon, ils n'ont encore jamais osé dire non aux Etats-Unis. Espérons qu'ils apprendront à le faire de Saddam.

—A votre avis, les vrais responsables de cette «sale guerre» sont donc Bush et ses «accolites»?

—Bien sûr. C'est bien Bush qui a ordonné l'attaque contre l'Irak. Mais lorsque la coalition (ou ce qui va en rester) sera défaite, on s'activera fébrilement partout à trouver des boucs émissaires. Vous aurez probablement chez-vous un Golfe-gate: plusieurs généraux et colonels de la CIA y seront incriminés pour ne pas avoir su estimer correctement la force et la détermination de l'Irak; l'astrologue attiré de la Maison Blanche y passera probablement aussi, pour avoir prédit que la victoire ne prendrait que quelques heures. Par contre, les peuples arabes sauront reconnaître les vrais traîtres parmi eux, et beaucoup de têtes tomberont dans notre région. Enfin, le Tout-Puissant qui avait déjà détruit Sodome, enverra Saddam détruire Israël.

Sabri Farah

OECD chief sees impact of Gulf war shifting with variances

DAVOS, Switzerland (R) — The Gulf war should have a limited impact on the world economy if the conflict does not spread, more advanced weapons are not used, and terrorists do not cause serious damage, a top economist said Friday.

Jean-Claude Paye, secretary-general of the Paris-based Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD), said the main economic impact so far had been the over-reaction of many consumers and companies. Paye said it was impossible to be certain exactly what impact the war would have on the world economy.

"But if there is no geographical expansion, no technological upgrading of the war, as compared with today, probably the economic impact will be limited," he told Reuters in an interview. He said terrorism could have a serious impact if, for instance, many refineries were blown up, but so far this had not been a serious problem.

Commenting on what he saw as over-reaction to the war, he said: "When I learn the day after the war broke out that many, many companies in the United States and everywhere had decided to forbid any travel of their managers or high officials, I was appalled."

Paye, in Davos for the annual meeting of the World Economic Forum, said he was also shocked to find people in Paris hoarding foodstuffs, saying this was further proof of what he called the excessive impact of the media. "You have an exaggeration of the reactions of the consumers and companies," he said.

The OECD, a 24-nation think-tank, predicted in a report last December, a month before the war broke out, that output among its members would grow by two per cent this year, down from 2.8 per cent in 1990.

It said then that the Gulf crisis finally pushing the weak U.S. economy into recession, but Germany and Japan would propel the industrial world as a whole to a ninth consecutive year of growth. Paye said the war's impact on oil prices should be limited because "the reduction of oil production linked to the (United Nations) embargo (on Iraq) has been matched since August by increased production of other countries."

Recession-hit Britain counts the cost of war in the Gulf

LONDON (R) — Britain said Friday it would have to raise public spending this year by £600 million (\$1.2 billion) to meet costs of the Gulf war.

A treasury announcement was made as politicians and newspaper editors asked who would pay for Britain's war role.

Public spending for the year to April is now put at £181.2 billion (\$362.4 billion), up from an earlier forecast of £180.6 billion (\$361.2 billion).

"Increases for military deployments to the Gulf account for almost all the increase in the estimate," the treasury said in a statement on its revised spending plans.

David Mellor, chief secretary to the treasury, flew to the United Arab Emirates Friday to try to secure some cash help. This week Germany pledged £275 million (\$550 million) to Britain. Saudi Arabia will also meet some expenses.

But this will be a fraction of the total and Britain, in the grip of a severe recession, is seeking financial contributions from other nations, particularly from economic

superpower Japan.

The bill for six British Tornado aircraft lost so far is more than \$240 million. Some grim economic forecasts put British Gulf war expenditure at more than \$20 billion.

"The British government, unlike America's has been remarkably slow to pass the bat around," said an article published Friday in the Economist, a weekly magazine.

The Daily Mail summed up indignation over what one junior British minister called Europe's "feeble" response to the war.

"We are glad to play an honourable part in repelling aggression, but it will be a shabby business if we also have to bear an unfair share of the cost," a Mail editorial said.

Despite rising unemployment, high inflation and the worst spate of corporate disasters for decades Prime Minister John Major is riding high in opinion polls as the most popular premier since World War II leader Winston Churchill.

British victory over Argentina in the 1982 Falkland Islands war which buoyed the political fortunes of then premier Margaret Thatcher cost more than \$4 billion in today's terms.

Three times more troops are involved in the Gulf.

Defence Secretary Tom King told parliament Thursday that

40,000 British military personnel formed Britain's Gulf commitment, condemned "Operation Granby."

He said more than £1.25 billion (\$2.5 billion) had been spent, excluding lost equipment and ammunition used.

The runway-busting JP233 bomb dropped by Tornados to help establish air superiority over the Iraqis costs £1 million (\$2 million) each.

King announced Friday the latest tranche of £260 million (\$520 million) for the defence budget pushing it up to £22.1 billion (\$44.2 billion).

Analysts said that if Chancellor of the Exchequer (Finance Minister) Norman Lamont spreads war costs over several years and borrows they need not take a great toll on the economy.

But the uncertainty of war has bit British business confidence with industrialists wary of making big decisions, a trend which analysts said could intensify recession.

The German Bundesbank's decision to raise interest rates has given less scope for Britain to bring down its own punishingly high bank base interest rate, held at 14 per cent to fight inflation and defend the pound sterling.

The still relatively high rate was cut last October from 15 per cent, the level at which it had stood for a year.

Lloyd's cuts insurance rates for Gulf area

LONDON (AP) — The Lloyd's of London insurance market Friday sharply cut insurance rates for marine and air cargo going to the Gulf, reflecting optimism that the war won't cause widespread damage to commercial aircraft and ships.

For marine cargo going to Oatar, Bahrain and other Gulf ports, the rates were cut to one per cent of the value of the cargo from two per cent.

Rates for marine cargo going to Iranian ports were cut to 0.75 per cent from two per cent.

Marine cargo rates for Saudi Arabian Red Sea ports and Jeddah were cut to 0.125 per cent from 0.25 per cent.

For Israeli Mediterranean ports, marine cargo rates were cut to 0.25 per cent from 0.5 per cent, and marine cargo rates for Israeli Red Sea ports and Jordan were cut to 0.25 per cent from 0.375 per cent.

Israeli air cargo rates were cut to 0.15 per cent and 0.20 per cent from 0.25 per cent.

Greenspan warns of deep slump in U.S. if war runs for more than three months

WASHINGTON (R) — U.S. Federal Reserve (Fed) Board Chairman Alan Greenspan has said that a prolonged war in the Gulf would increase the risk of a deep recession.

Greenspan said the sharp drop in consumer confidence after the start of the Gulf conflict helped push the American economy into recession, and he said confidence could deteriorate if the war dragged on.

"The risk is there, and I think the risk obviously would increase," Greenspan told a congressional panel. "This is an economy which is obviously subject — more than any time I've seen in the recent past — to changes in psychology."

The central bank chairman denied that he had turned more pessimistic about the U.S. economic outlook since last week, when he said he saw signs that the worst might be over.

His remarks before the House Banking Committee followed an interview published Thursday in the New York Times in which Greenspan described what might happen if the Gulf war stretched beyond March. "If you get beyond three months, you begin to risk consumer confidence erosion, and that would abort any meaningful recovery," the Times quoted Greenspan as saying.

Meanwhile, the U.S. unemployment rate increased for the third month in a row to reach 6.2 per cent in January, its highest level since June 1987, the Labour Department said Friday.

In December the jobless rate was 6.1 per cent. The employment report was the first official glimpse of U.S. economic activity in January.

With the economy mired in recession, payroll jobs outside the farm sector fell steeply by 232,000 compared with a revised 48,000 drop in December. Previously the department reported December payroll jobs fell 76,000.

The manufacturing sector, which has shed 900,000 jobs in the past two years, lost 69,000 positions in January after a 45,000 December job loss. Large losses were recorded in construction and car-related industries, the department said.

Further declines in factory employment probably are ahead. Eastern Airlines' recent collapse put 18,000 people out of work, and Trans World Airlines is cutting about 2,500 from its workforce.

"The worst is yet to come," said Michael Neimira, an economist at Mitsubishi Bank Ltd.

Employment figures typically lag behind a recovery. So even though there are signs the recession is abating — the 2.1 per cent drop in gross national product in late 1990 was less severe than expected, and the January index of leading indicators turned upwards for the first time in six months — many economists expect several more months of grim jobs data.

Top U.S. arms makers plan large layoffs

CLAYTON, Missouri (AP) — Workers faced layoffs at two top defence contractors Friday in the face of government weapons cuts, but a spokesman said new tank orders from the Middle East saved some jobs.

General Dynamics Corp. plans to lay off about 1,200 workers this year at three tank-making plants, company officials said Friday.

It's the second round of layoff notices in less than a month for the nation's second-biggest defence contractor.

Last month the company laid off about 4,000 aerospace workers after Defence Secretary Dick Cheney cancelled the development of the navy's A-12 jet because of cost overruns and delays.

Pittsburgh-based Westinghouse laid off 1,200 employees from its electronic systems group, citing Cheney's announcement.

Westinghouse was a subcontractor for General Dynamics and McDonnell Douglas Corp., the primary contractors for the A-12 programme. Westinghouse was to have supplied radar and a device called the combined function infrared set for the new Stealth jet.

The layoffs announced Friday by General Dynamics will be completed by September 1991. They had long been expected, said Don Gilleland, a spokesman for the land systems division based in Sterling Heights, Michigan.

The division operates two plants and employs about 7,000 people.

"This is actually good news because a year ago we were looking at closing both plants and laying everyone off," Gilleland said. "But now we don't have to close either one and we're keeping most of the people working."

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SECOND EXTENSION OF CLOSING DATE

The Municipality of Greater Amman announces the extension of the closing date of the Road Maintenance Equipment Tender until March 4, 1991.

Romania begins crisis energy-saving steps

BUCHAREST (R) — Cash-strapped Romania has announced emergency energy saving measures aimed at cutting consumption in industry while keeping citizens warm at home through the winter.

The government said in statements issued Thursday and Friday that crisis measures, which could include halting oil imports, were needed due to growing trade and balance of payments deficits, shrinking external gas supplies and the Gulf war.

The government has approved a crisis programme considering even a total halt in oil imports, it said. It would come into effect immediately.

The government appealed to both industrial and household consumers to save energy but officials said homes would get enough heat through the winter. "Heat and electricity will be supplied normally and the people will not suffer from a harsh winter," industry ministry spokesman Bogdan Popescu told Reuters.

Popescu said the crisis programme would hit energy-guzzling metallurgical, chemical and building materials plants. Industry would pay four times the normal price for any unjustified rise in power consumption, the statement said.

The government imposed partial petrol rationing last month, limiting sales to 40 litres a month per car owner and charging double for extra fuel. Romania's domestic oil and gas output covers only 35 per cent of its energy needs and the Gulf crisis has cut off oil imports from Iraq, which had agreed to pay off a \$1.7 billion debt to Bucharest in oil.

Romania ended 1990 with a \$1.5 billion hard currency trade deficit and a 1.7 billion roubles trade deficit with eastern Europe and the Soviet Union. If oil imports were halted, the

hardest-hit sector would be Romania's refining and petrochemical industry.

Built up under executed dictator Nicolae Ceausescu, the petrochemical industry is capable of processing up to 34 million tonnes of oil a year — far exceeding domestic needs.

Popescu said the refineries would close down partially, but added: "We do not intend to stop production completely."

To add to Romania's economic problems, the Soviet Union which in the past supplied eight per cent of Romania's oil imports, is now restricting exports.

AMMAN EXCHANGE RATES		
Saturday, February 2, 1991 Central Bank official rates		
	Buy	Sell
U.S. dollar	664.0	668.0
Pound Sterling	1310.4	1318.3
Deutschemark	452.2	454.9
Swiss franc	530.3	533.5
French franc	132.9	133.7
Japanese yen (for 100)	504.6	507.6
Dutch guilder	401.5	403.9
Swedish crown	120.7	121.4
Italian lira (for 100)	60.1	60.5
Belgian franc (for 10)	220.2	221.5

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Cinema **PHILADELPHIA** Tel: 634144

TOTAL RECALL

Performances: 12:30, 3:30, 6:15, 8:30

Cinema **NUJUM** Tel: 675571

TOTAL RECALL

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Friday & Sunday extra show at 11:00 a.m.

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Madiha Kamel/ Kamal Shinnawi in SHAWADER (Arabic)

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Special issue No. 2 Drawing of Feb. 2, 1991

Winning Tickets	
<p>Holder of ticket No. 80288 Wins JD 40,000</p> <p>Holder of ticket No. 74377 Wins JD 7,500</p> <p>Holder of ticket No. 14989 Wins JD 4,000</p> <p>Holder of ticket No. 18678 Wins JD 3,500</p> <p>Holder of ticket No. 91697 Wins JD 3,000</p> <p>Holder of ticket No. 29309 Wins JD 2,000</p> <p>Holder of ticket No. 36006 Wins JD 1,500</p> <p>Holder of ticket No. 36399 Wins JD 1,000</p>	<p>Ten consolation prizes totalling JD 3,000 each wins JD 300 80289 80298 80388 81288 90288 80287 80278 80188 89288 70288</p> <p>Ten consolation prizes totalling JD 1,500 each wins JD 150 74378 74387 74477 75377 84377 74376 74367 74277 73377 64377</p> <p>Ten consolation prizes totalling JD 1,000 each wins JD 100 14980 14999 14089 15989 24989 14988 14979 14889 13989 04989</p> <p>Ten consolation prizes totalling JD 800 each wins JD 80 18679 18688 18778 19678 28678 18677 18668 18578 17678 08678</p> <p>Ten consolation prizes totalling JD 500 each wins JD 50 91698 91607 91797 92697 01697 91696 91687 91597 90697 81697</p> <p>Ten consolation prizes totalling JD 400 each wins JD 40 29300 29319 29409 20309 39309 29308 29399 29209 28309 19309</p> <p>Ten consolation prizes totalling JD 200 each wins JD 20 36007 36016 36106 37006 46006 36005 36096 36906 35006 26006</p> <p>Ten consolation prizes totalling JD 100 each wins JD 10 36390 36309 36499 37399 46399 36398 36389 36299 35399 26399</p>

Ticket numbers **48924 86101 11894 34154** win JD 300 each

Ticket numbers **67458 78764 85852 10745** win JD 200 each

TICKETS ENDING WITH

8194 4220 9521 5617 4991 Win JD 50 each	2464 7228 8971 0983 8510 Win JD 20 each
050 654 Win JD 10 each	60 45 Win JD 6 each
10,000 ticket ending with 8 Win JD 3 each	

COVER PRIZES FOR THE LOTTERY SELLERS

Fifty covers, attached to the stub of 10 ending in **847 014 912 842 396** Win JD 10

Winners of the grand prizes in the Special issue number 1 of Jan. 17, 1991

Nasser Abu Rumman
Half first — JD 25,000

Yousef Dallan
Half first — JD 25,000

Mohammed Al Haj Hassan
Full second — JD 10,000

Mohammed Bari Khaldi
Full fourth — JD 5,000

Sari Mustafa
Half sixth — JD 1,500

Mahmoud Kudi
Half sixth — JD 1,500

Raghad Yassin
Full seventh — JD 2,400

Next Draw takes place on February 17, 1991
First eight biggest prizes are issued from GUVS headquarters

Soviet army patrol beats Lithuanian man

Yeltsin's Radio Russia muzzled

MOSCOW (Agencies) — A liberal radio station said Saturday that Soviet state broadcasting authorities had cut it off from a major audience after it had angered President Mikhail Gorbachev with its coverage of the Baltics.

A spokesman for Radio Russia, whose programmes reflect the liberal views of Russian populist leader Boris Yeltsin, said the radio had been barred from access to the main frequencies used by most Soviet listeners.

Spokesman Sergei Pustovoi said the move stemmed from a complaint by Gorbachev to broadcasting chief Leonid Kravchenko about the radio's coverage of the army crackdown in Lithuania on Jan. 13 in which 13 unarmed civilians were killed.

"The president asked Kravchenko 'how is it that on main frequencies there is anti-Soviet broadcasting?'," he said.

The move, which was certain to sour further the bad relations between Yeltsin and Gorbachev, underscored the Kremlin leader's shift to the conservative camp as problems in the country defy easy solutions.

Communist Party hardliners, capitalising on Gorbachev's shift, indicated that they were readying their forces for an offensive against liberals after a long time on the retreat.

The party surrendered its monopoly on power a year ago but made a comeback in recent months as Gorbachev, party general secretary as well as state president, moved to the right.

Russia's hardline Communist leader, Ivan Polozkov, in comments reported Saturday, said there could now no longer be any question of a multi-party system being established.

"Our pseudo-democrats trample on the constitution and kindle ethnic conflicts. The anti-Communist movement readily supports international capital. All this is done under the flag of saving perestroika," Polozkov said in a speech at a meeting of the party leadership last Thursday.

"There can be no talk now about any multi-party system. There is the CPSU (Communist Party of the Soviet Union), which upholds Socialist perestroika, and there are leaders with one political countenance — anti-Communism," he said.

Central Committee Secretary Oleg Shenin, calling for a purge of liberal and radicals in party ranks, said at the same meeting:

"There are many instances when Communists and also party organisations do not consider it necessary to abide by the rules of the CPSU and try, without permission, to modify them according to their own reasoning."

Gorbachev, in an apparent bid to display moderation after bloodshed in the Baltics, Friday ordered the creation of delegations for talks with Baltic leaders.

But Estonian Prime Minister Edgar Savisaar told Baltic News Agency that a subsequent meeting of the Federation Council, which groups central and republican leaders, had been a difficult

one for the Baltic republics.

Savisaar quoted Deputy Defence Minister Valentin Varenikov as saying at the meeting that the three Baltic republics — Lithuania, Latvia and Estonia — had "become a bastion of Western ideology and the holed for far-reaching American strategic plans."

TASS News Agency said speakers at the meeting cited anti-constitutional acts and violations of human rights as being responsible for the conflict in the Baltic republics, which are seeking to regain pre-World War II independence.

Liberal suspicions over Gorbachev's move to the right have been fuelled by a decision to send troops onto the streets of Moscow and other major cities in patrols with police.

Kremlin officials say the joint patrols, which began on Friday, are to strengthen the fight against common crime but many liberals say they are part of plans for creeping dictatorship aimed at stifling pro-democracy forces.

Meanwhile a joint patrol of Soviet police and soldiers beat a Lithuanian man just hours after the patrols went into effect, a parliamentary spokesman said Saturday.

It was the first reported violence involving the joint army-police patrols, which have been criticised by Baltic leaders as an attempt by the Kremlin to strengthen control over the breakaway republics.

The patrols began in major Soviet cities under orders from

Defence Minister Dmitri Yazov

and Interior Minister Boris Pugo. The Lithuanian parliamentary spokesman, Audrius Azubalis, told reporters at a press conference that four or five policemen and soldiers armed with automatic weapons stopped the 22-year-old man in downtown Vilnius at about 9 p.m. (1800 GMT) Friday.

The patrol demanded the man's identification papers. But before he could produce his documents, the soldiers and police knocked him to the ground and beat him, according to Azubalis.

The man was hospitalised with facial cuts and jaw injuries. Azubalis said.

In recent weeks, Soviet troops occupied key buildings in the Baltics and intensified efforts to round up draft evaders. They have conducted random searches on the streets of the capital and at roadblocks around the city.

More than 15 draft-age Lithuanian men have disappeared from the streets and are believed to have been taken by the army, according to the parliament's press office.

Since declaring independence last March 11, Lithuania's legislature has contended that citizens of the republic are not required to serve in the Soviet military.

The draft age in the Soviet Union is 18 to 28.

In another incident in Vilnius Friday, an army captain allegedly entered a house looking for a conscript and bit the conscript's father in the head, Azubalis said.

It was unclear whether the captain was part of a joint patrol.

Pakistan quake toll may surpass 200

ISLAMABAD (R) — The official death toll from Pakistan's most powerful earthquake in recent years rose to 175 Saturday, and government officials said it was likely to surpass 200.

Four remote mountainous districts in North West Frontier province, which borders Afghanistan, were hit by the quake early Friday. Officials said several hundred people were injured and hundreds of houses collapsed or were damaged.

The authorities said 175 bodies had been found by Saturday morning but they feared the death toll would rise as information trickled in from distant snow-bound areas of the province.

Army helicopters were flying medical supplies, food and clothing to the region.

Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif was expected to visit one of the worst-hit areas in Chitral district later Saturday.

Several Islamic prayer leaders described the quake as a divine warning to Pakistan for its official anti-Iraq policy in the Gulf war.

"This is a warning from Allah to Muslims to get together to fight infidels," one told the Friday prayer congregation in an Islamabad mosque.

Seismologists in Peshawar, the provincial capital, recorded the quake on the Richter Scale. A 1974 quake in the region registered 6.3 and killed 5,000 people.

Officials put the epicentre 200 kilometres northwest of the city, in the Hindu Kush.

The area is frequently shaken by tremors that can do severe damage in villages where houses are generally made of mud brick. Most of the casualties were caused by collapsing houses, officials said.

Last Oct. 25, a quake measuring 6.6 on the Richter Scale killed 13 people. One measuring 5.7 in 1981 killed 220 people in the same area.

Ground rescue parties have been sent in but access is difficult because of snow and the mountainous terrain, officials said.

The region has had unusually heavy snow this winter and roads to many stricken villages are blocked, they said.

Two villages in the Kobilistan area of Swat district were "completely destroyed," an official said in Peshawar. He said casualty figures were not available immediately because the area was snowbound.

Seventy-five deaths were reported from Swat, Chitral and the Dir district of North West Frontier Province. Official Bakhtar News Agency said 17 eastern and northern provinces were hit by the quake.

Afghanistan officials said relief workers had been unable to reach most of the affected provinces because of deep snow.

15 killed in burning jet at Los Angeles airport

LOS ANGELES (R) — A U.S. Air Boeing 737 burst into flames after colliding with a commuter plane and hitting a building as it landed at Los Angeles International Airport Friday night, killing at least 15 people and possibly 14 others, an airline spokeswoman said.

Forty people were injured in the crash, 10 of them severely. But 21 people walked away from the flaming wreckage of the airline, split in two by the impact of the crash, said the spokeswoman, Agnes Huff.

Firemen searched the blackened wreckage of the airliner, which had the top half of its rear section sheared off, for signs of the missing 14.

The remains of a small Skywest commuter Fairchild Metroliner plane were jammed under the belly of the twin-engine airliner.

Federal Aviation Administration officials said they believed at least one of the 10 passengers and two crewmembers on board the commuter plane, which was taxiing for a flight to Palmdale, California, was killed in the collision.

Skywest was expected to give details later.

The Boeing 737 rested against an abandoned fire station, which it hit after sliding off the runway and across a field, knocking off a corner of the brickwork.

Huff said the airliner was carrying 84 passengers and a crew of six on a flight from Columbus, Ohio, after taking off from Syracuse, New York, and landing in

Washington DC on the way. U.S. Air passengers said the plane filled with smoke as they struggled to leave, helped by firemen, from the front of the plane.

Debris lay scattered round the wreckage of the airliner and smoke covered the airport, one of the busiest in the United States, for about an hour while the fire was extinguished.

Helicopters lit up the night sky with searchlights and fire engines surrounded the wreckage.

One survivor, Dr Chul Hong, of Canton, Ohio, said he heard a loud noise and thought a tyre had blown.

"Then I saw flames and everybody started screaming their heads off," he said. "I thought I was going to die."

Hong said he opened one of the plane's emergency exit doors and jumped on to a wing. "I then jumped down on to the ground and I ran away from the fire," he said.

When he looked back the plane was engulfed in flames. "It was a miracle any of us survived," he said.

Eighty-two people were killed, including 15 on the ground, when a Aeromexico DC-9 airliner and a private Piper Cherokee plane collided in the air over Cerritos, 50 kilometres east of Los Angeles, on Aug. 31, 1986.

"When I looked out the window the back of the plane was on fire," an eyewitness who lives near the airport said.

Croatia to resist if army tries to arrest minister

ZAGREB, Yugoslavia (AP) — Croatian officials said Saturday they were prepared to resist with arms any attempt by Yugoslavia's federal military to detain the secessionist republic's defence minister.

The federal army said Friday it was "undertaking steps" to bring Croatian Defence Minister Martin Spigelj into custody after Croatian police defied an earlier order to arrest him.

The military ordered Spigelj's arrest for allegedly plotting armed rebellion.

A covertly filmed army documentary screened last Friday purported to show Spigelj plotting to kill army officers and their families in case of civil war in Croatia.

The film, denounced by Croatian authorities as a Stalinist frameup, accused Spigelj and others of importing weapons from Hungary, allegedly in order to create an independent Croatian army.

The republic's president, Franjo Tudjman, compared the federal government's threat to send in army troops to arrest Spigelj to the Soviet Union's use of military force in the Baltic republics.

Tudjman, interviewed while attending an international conference in Switzerland, warned that if the army did now intervene, it could touch off instability within

its own ranks. Some federal soldiers are from Croatia, Slovenia and other republics that, he said, might oppose the federal government's actions.

"If the army attacks, very quickly it will finally be destroying not only the army, but any possibility of a peaceful solution and even the idea of a Yugoslavia," Tudjman said.

Asked if Croatia would use force to respond, he said, "yes, we are determined because this is an attempt to destroy Croatian democracy and Croatian freedom."

A ranking Croatian police officer, speaking on condition of anonymity, said his forces "will not let the military arrest Spigelj even if it means an open clash with the army."

The officer said Spigelj, whose whereabouts are not known, "is in a secure place."

Hrvoje Sarenic, chief of the Croatian cabinet, said he was confident the local police and population would succeed in resisting the federal army, if that became necessary.

"I am not very optimistic today that we can avoid a civil war," Sarenic added.

Tudjman reiterated that Croatia favours a state in which each republic is "free and sovereign" to handle its own internal matters.

U.S. claims rise in democracy, ethnic conflicts

WASHINGTON (R) — The U.S. State Department, presenting its annual report on human rights worldwide, has said that democracy was advancing throughout the world, but so were bloody ethnic conflicts.

"Totalitarian and authoritarian dictatorships are on the decline worldwide and democracy and respect for the rights of the individual are on the rise," said Assistant Secretary of State Richard Schifter, whose department compiled the 168-country report for Congress.

A generally upbeat report on the Soviet Union was tempered by criticism of recent moves by the central government to reassert control.

Schifter was encouraged by the consolidation of democracy in Eastern Europe and what he called a "democratic ferment" in sub-Saharan Africa.

But a growing problem was ethnic violence which produced the major tragedies of 1990 in Liberia and Somalia and threatened to help cause a major famine in Sudan this year.

"Few Americans are fully aware of the tragic results of the internal conflicts in Liberia and Somalia, for instance, of the measures taken by Mauritania against its black population, of continuing intercommunal strife in India and Sri Lanka," Schifter said.

The independent organisation Human Rights Watch, in a statement on the report, said the State Department pulled its punches with respect to U.S. allies.

"In some countries political considerations clearly influenced the tone and substance of the report," the statement said.

It said Israel's shooting of 17 Arabs on temple mount was hardly mentioned while fear of embarrassing Saudi Arabia resulted in a report which significantly under-represents the seriousness of human rights abuses in that country.

The bloodshed in the three-sided civil war in Liberia was appalling, the report said. It said all parties to the conflict were equally guilty of "indiscriminate killing and abuse of civilians, looting and ethnically-based executions."

Leaders of the various factions did nothing to stop the killings and in some cases encouraged or were directly responsible for them, the report said.

Greece protested to the United States Friday over the U.S. human rights report which said minority Muslims and Slavic-speaking Macedonians in Greece were suffering discrimination.

Government spokesman Byron Polydoros described the charges in a State Department report as "unprecedented and unfounded."

ANC welcomes De Klerk reforms, calls for more

JOHANNESBURG (Agencies) — Anti-apartheid leader Nelson Mandela Saturday welcomed President F.W. De Klerk's plans to repeal all South Africa's remaining apartheid laws by June but said important obstacles still lay ahead in forging a new constitution.

Mandela, deputy president of the African National Congress (ANC), said De Klerk's package of proposals announced Friday marked a narrowing of views between the ANC and the white minority government.

"These developments will be of great assistance, conducive to the elaboration of a new constitution," Mandela told a news conference. But he said De Klerk's silence about political exiles and prisoners suggested a reluctance on the government's part to address these issues.

Mandela said it was ironic that De Klerk had rejected the ANC's proposal for an interim government and a popularly-elected constituent assembly to thrash out a new-racial constitution.

He said that De Klerk's National Party government could not fairly preside over the transition to democracy while at the same time being a party to negotiations on political change.

"We are of the view that only a freely-elected assembly can provide the forum for a transition to democracy in South Africa," he said.

Mandela said he was disappointed that De Klerk had made no reference to South Africa's strict security laws which the ANC wants repealed or heavily amended.

He said "this is one of the most obstinate obstacles" to the 10-month-old negotiating process between the government and the

ANC, South Africa's main black opposition group.

Meanwhile, praise poured in from overseas for De Klerk's call to eliminate apartheid laws, but black opposition groups complained Saturday the white minority wants to keep power.

The United States, Canada, Britain, the European Community and United Nations Secretary-General Javier Perez de Cuellar all praised the speech. U.S., EC and British officials said it could lead to a softening of international sanctions imposed to protest apartheid.

Back home, opposition groups from both ends of the political spectrum protested aspects of the speech, for different reasons.

The pro-apartheid Conservative Party, whose members walked out of parliament when De Klerk announced plans to eliminate the apartheid laws, called the president a traitor to white South Africans.

A right-wing extremist group applauded the Conservative Party's actions and said it should quit parliament to help form a separate state for Afrikaners — the Dutch-descended settlers of South Africa.

Black opposition groups, while welcoming the planned repeal of all apartheid laws, said De Klerk's speech indicated he wanted to remain in power during negotiations on ending white minority rule.

The ANC and other groups have called for an elected constituent assembly to draft a new constitution and an interim government to oversee the transition.

De Klerk's government has rejected the calls, saying it must remain in power to guarantee stability.

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Albanian Democratic Party publishes election platform

TIRANA, Albania (AP) — Communist Albania's main opposition party promised private enterprise, land reform and better living conditions in a platform published Saturday.

The Democratic Party programme, published in its newspaper, Democratic Revival, was more radical than that of the ruling Albanian Labour (Communist) Party, said Gramoz Pashko, a leader of Albania's first opposition party, formed Dec. 12.

Since then, at least three other opposition groups have been legalised. Elections are March 31.

The democratic programme also enshrined freedom of religion and freedom of speech and promised to "support the battle of the people of Kosovo for self-determination."

It did not detail what sort of support could be given to the ethnic Albanian majority in that troubled Yugoslav province, now under direct rule by Yugoslavia's largest state of Serbia.

State housing, kiosks, shops, restaurants, bars and hotels would be privatised first under a

Democratic Party government, the programme said.

Larger enterprises would be divided into shares distributed to all Albanian adults.

The programme, translated for a reporter by a party member, also promised to distribute land free to the peasants who work it and enshrined the right to private property and inheritance.

"Peasants will be able to choose whether they farm their individual plots or form cooperatives," Pashko said.

Some 65 per cent of Albania's 3.2 million people live in rural areas, and are thought to be generally more loyal to the ruling Communists than city residents.

Under the Communists, farming is done on state-run combines or cooperatives of plots of land rented from the state.

Albania's ruling Communists, under President Ramiz Alia have allowed some small scale private enterprise already and promised to further open the centrally planned economy, now on the brink of collapse.

More bodies found in S. African province

JOHANNESBURG, South Africa (AP) — One black died and 14 were hospitalised after people were thrown from a train travelling between Johannesburg and Soweto, police said.

Two more bodies were found near Umgababa in eastern Natal province, police said, raising to 10 the number of people killed there in a fierce clash between black factions this week.

Meanwhile, an army vehicle struck a land mine in the northern Transvaal Friday, injuring six soldiers. It was not clear who planted the mine, but the African National Congress denied involvement.

Police Col. Tienie Halgryn said the train violence appeared unrelated to a call by the ANC and other groups for workers to stay home Friday to protest apartheid.

The ANC has been accused of intimidating people going to work on days of stayaways.

Chronic fighting between supporters to the ANC rival groups, usually the conservative Zulu-dominated Inkatha Freedom Party, has ravaged several black townships near Johannesburg since August. Several attacks occurred on trains or in stations, killing dozens of people.

Delay could undermine nuclear pact — U.S. negotiator

GENEVA (R) — U.S. Ambassador Richard Burt, head of the American delegation negotiating a reduction of nuclear weapons with the Soviet Union, has said years of work could be lost if a treaty was not concluded quickly.

"If we fail to agree by the end of February, there is a very real risk that the whole thing could unravel," Burt said on his return from superpower talks in Washington.

Burt told Reuters he expected to finish the treaty by the end of this month, as President George Bush and Soviet Foreign Minister Alexander Bessmertnykh agreed this week in Washington.

But he showed less optimism than he had ever done since he took the job in mid-1989.

His Soviet counterpart, Ambassador Yuri Nazarkin, said Moscow remained as committed as ever to a swift conclusion and that he also expected to meet the target date.

"We're in favour of a fast conclusion of this treaty," he said. "I think we'll finish the treaty by the end of February."

Problems in the negotiations were among reasons for the postponement of a planned Feb. 11-13 Moscow summit between Bush and Soviet President Mikhail Gorbachev. Now the summit is to be held some time before mid-1991.

U.S. officials worry that the Soviet military, which seems to have strengthened its hand in internal Soviet policy, is forcing the Soviet delegation in Geneva to take a harder line on the strategic arms reduction treaty (START).

"The (military) seem to have a stronger voice in the arms

control process," said Burt.

The START negotiations, which began in 1982, have the goal of making deep cuts in the two sides' long-range nuclear arsenals, now totalling about 12,000 warheads each.

The United States says the Soviet side rowed back on some of the agreements reached at a meeting in Houston in December between U.S. Secretary of State James Baker and Bessmertnykh's predecessor, Eduard Shevardnadze.

Nazarkin's view was that the two sides had different interpretations on what was agreed in Houston.

Both Burt and Nazarkin said that the main issues agreed there — regarding Soviet SS-18 heavy missiles, Soviet backfire bombers and U.S. sales of Trident missiles to Britain — had once again been settled.

Only technical questions remained, but it still had to be seen whether the two sides would be able to push forward and eliminate all their differences in what most analysts say is a less friendly atmosphere.

"We're at an important crossroads. We're at a point where either we can finish in the near future or we won't finish in a very long time," Burt said.

"The crucial question is whether the two governments have the political will to settle this early on."

He added: "We don't know the direction of future events in the Soviet Union, and I think the START treaty would be a very useful insurance policy."

"For the first seven years of this treaty, the Soviet Union will have to eliminate from its arsenal

one nuclear missile every 66 hours. That can't be bad. It has to be in our interest."

Diplomats said Soviet Deputy Foreign Minister Alexei Obukhov and U.S. Under-Secretary of State Reginald Bartholomew would possibly begin several days of meetings in Geneva next Thursday to help push things along.

Meanwhile, U.S. officials say a dispute over an accord reducing conventional forces in Europe threatens to derail both pacts.

During talks in Washington this week, Secretary of State James Baker told Soviet Foreign Minister Alexander Bessmertnykh that the landmark treaty on conventional forces in Europe (CFE) will not be sent to the U.S. Senate for approval unless Moscow accepts the U.S. position, one official told Reuters.

If the CFE treaty, signed with much hoopla in Paris last November, is stymied, U.S. officials and congressional aides say it will be hard if not impossible to get the Senate to approve a strategic arms reduction pact (START).

U.S. officials accuse Moscow of deliberately circumventing CFE limits and say this raises doubts about Soviet President Mikhail Gorbachev's commitment to arms treaties that have already been signed.

Moscow claims to have stationed in Europe about 20,000 fewer tanks, artillery pieces and armoured combat vehicles than Washington says are there. Before CFE was signed, U.S. experts say, Moscow moved about 70,000 tanks and other equipment beyond the Ural Mountains to escape treaty limits.

More importantly, Moscow has

sought to reclassify three army mechanised divisions as "naval infantry" in an effort to save their equipment, including an estimated 1,000 tanks, from destruction mandated by the CFE treaty.

Bessmertnykh offered a compromise, promising that the units will not be expanded, but "we said that's not good enough," one U.S. official said.

"They have to live up to what they signed. Otherwise, Baker said... bluntly to Bessmertnykh that we're not going to submit the treaty for ratification," he said.

Although arms control has been played down recently as U.S. and Soviet leaders cooperate in other areas such as the Gulf, failure to complete the CFE and START treaties would be a powerful sign of a deteriorating superpower relationship.

Officials say the outcome hinges largely on whether Gorbachev can or will assert control and tell the military to loosen its strong band over the negotiations.

His crackdown against pro-independence governments in the Baltics and his willingness to rely on the military and the KGB as a power base have raised questions in Washington about his reliability as a partner in treaties and other endeavours.

Referring to the dispute over CFE, one official said: "It's time for Gorbachev to settle this one."

"The military has had its run at trying to essentially squirm out of an obligation Gorbachev accepted freely on Nov. 19," when he joined U.S. President George Bush and a score of other leaders in signing the treaty, the official said.

COLUMN

Mother hires hit man to help daughter be cheerleader

HOUSTON (R) — An American mother was so intent on making sure her daughter got a place in a school cheerleading squad that she was willing to hire a hit man to kill a competitor's mother, authorities said Friday. Wand Webb Holloway, 36, of Chaney, Texas, plotted the murder in the hope that her daughter, 13-year-old rival would be overwhelmed with grief that she would drop out of the competition, authorities said. Holloway was arrested and released on bail after being charged with soliciting murder. If convicted she could be sentenced to life in prison. Cheerleaders, usually girls or young women, perform gymnastic routines and shout cheers during sporting events. Most public high schools have a cheerleading squad and belonging to it is a symbol of status female students.

Montana wins French fashion 'Oscar'

PARIS (R) — France's Claude Montana had become the first designer to win Paris fashion's most coveted prize twice in a row. He won the Golden Thread Award for the best spring summer line with a daringly modern collection for Paris fashion house Lanvin,